POLICE · BUDGET · EDITION

EDITED · BY HAROLD FURNISS

FAMOUS CRIMES

PAST AND PRESENT

ONE · PENNY

"I WOULD SOONER SEE YOU DEAD!"

(See the Thrilling Story of Catherine Shaw.)

Vol. VII. - No. 85.

CATHERINE SHAW.

Her Singular Suicide, with its Sad and Startling Sequel, told in its entirety for the First Time.

"Justice so seldom errs; but when it does, the consequences—either, or both, to the guilty and the innocent—are terrific!"

—MR. JUSTICE BOMER (1845).

THE true circumstances attending the tragic death of Miss Catherine Shaw, of Edinburgh, in 1721, are known to very few. This terrible miscarriage of justice has been almost forgotten, and yet it remains to this day a historical proof of the fact that circumstantial evidence is not always and altogether infallible. I know that the terrible story of human suffering which I am about to relate is absolutely true; but it is none the less a fact that the authenticity of this tragic affair has often been questioned even by persons who might have been expected to know something of the circumstances of the case, and that doubt has been thrown on the whole story even by the most painstaking and careful of the historians of Scotland. Yet this terrible misadventure really occurred, and for the very first time its details are about to be given to the world. William Shaw, of Edinburgh, was hanged for the murder of his daughter, Catherine, in 1721, and the reader can accept this statement as being absolutely true. Nor is the aftermath of this tragedy less veracious. The writer has made the most exhaustive inquiries, and, after much intricate and involved research, has ascertained beyond all question that the facts are true. But the sources from which his information has been obtained are not open to a few, or even to anyone, and therefore it may be taken for granted that this is the only full, true, and particular account of this tragedy that has yet seen the composing-room or the light of day.

Many of my readers may have heard of a standard work entitled "The Percy Anecdotes." This compilation—the work of the Brothers Sholto and Thomas Percy in 1821—was first published about the year 1823, and was published to the world in twenty volumes. Anecdotes, more or less authentic, on various subjects were retailed therein, and the authors dealt rather extensively with matters of interest connected with justice and crime. That notorious murderer, Thurtell, in his powerful and eloquent defence, quoted "The Percy Anecdotes" in order to establish the fact that circumstantial evidence is not always to be absolutely relied on; and he made particular allusion to the case of William Shaw. The learned judge who tried Weare's murderer, however, threw much cold water on this portion of the prisoner's speech, and went so far as to declare that the accused man had been "extraordinarily ill-advised" in quoting "mysterious cases from a volume which professes to be purely anecdotal and which does not appear to have been written with any higher purpose than to interest and amuse."

As a matter of fact, "The Percy Anecdotes" only refers to the Edinburgh tragedy of 1721 in the vaguest way. This version supplies none of the details of this historical case, and is witty beyond question in regard to the matter, if brevity is, indeed, the soul of wit! This standard work dismisses the case of William and Catherine Shaw in a very few words; but other and more obscure authorities have been less reticent, and I have been able to gather together all the threads of the story and to make of them one concrete whole.

In the year 1721 there resided at No. 18, Campbell Street, Edinburgh, a tradesman of the name of William Shaw. This personage, predestined to so unfortunate an

Shaw proposed that he should marry Catherine.

end, was then forty-eight years of age, and had resided for ten years in the Scottish capital. By birth he was a Southron, hailing from Buckinghamshire, but he had migrated to Edinburgh in 1711, on the advice of his relatives across the border. His wife died in the year

1716, and left him with a daughter, Catherine, then aged thirteen. She was, therefore, eighteen years old at the time of this terrible tragedy. Shaw was a clever, well-educated man, as times went then, and was of a cautious and saving disposition. He was of medium height, hale and hearty in every way, but prematurely grey. He was a man of very choleric temper, obstinate, and determined, and fully accustomed to having his own way—at least, as far as his wife and child were concerned. Right up to the time of her death, he exacted a complete subservience to his will from his daughter, and, if report speaks truly, he did not hesitate, if she defied him, to resort to a corporal chastisement. Yet he was, on the whole, a good husband and father, and was much respected, in spite of, and perhaps because of, his peculiarities, by all who ever had dealings with him. By trade this William Shaw was an upholsterer, and he rented three rooms at the house in Campbell Street, which, as usual in Scotch residences, was let off to various families in what we now know as the "flat" system.

CATHERINE WAS SEEN TO MEET LANSON.

Catherine Shaw was one of the prettiest girls in Edinburgh Town. Everybody said so, and in this case everybody was right. She was tall and slender, but her figure was most shapely, and she had an air and a grace with her above her station. She had hair of a red-gold tint, and it hung, in long, wavy tresses, far below her trim and attractive little waist. Her eyes were of the true china-blue, and large and expressive. Her lips were rather thin, the nose the least bit retroussé, and the dimpled chin conveyed a slight suggestion of obstinacy, inherited, no doubt, from her stern father, of whom she stood in great awe.

But little Miss Catherine had, decidedly, a will of her own, and sometimes this will came into opposition with that, not less determined, of her parent. On these occasions Mr. Shaw generally contrived to get his own way in the end, and then Catherine would sulk and pout a little and consider herself a very harshly treated young woman indeed. I have read that she entertained very little real affection for the author of her being, though she had been devotedly attached to her mother, whose loss she never ceased to deplore.

Human nature in 1721 being very similar to what it is in 1904, Catherine had plenty of admirers. Her father had two young men apprenticed to him—steady young fellows, and good workmen—and both were in love with the fair face and the playful ways of their master's daughter. But the girl preferred to look farther afield; and, since she never gave them the last encouragement, and William Shaw himself, like a prudent father, strongly discouraged their advances, these youths have nothing to do with this history. As I have said, Catherine was eighteen, and she was not so happy at home as to preclude any thought of altering her condition in life. As a matter of fact, she was rather a precocious young damsel, and she gave much thought to the question of matrimony. When the right man came along, she was fully prepared to make him happy. In the meanwhile, the honest upholsterer was rather uneasy in his mind. He was somewhat of a puritanical turn of mind, and he could not fail to observe, with much mental misgiving, the admiration which his girl's charms everywhere elicited. When he took her to kirk twice a day on the Sundays the eyes of all the eligible men would be turned in their direction, and even in the sacred edifice itself, during the long and learned discourse of the Rev. James McMawswoen, Catherine would be perpetually blushing under the heavy fire of batteries of masculine orbs. Mysterious notes, and even more ambiguous presents, came constantly to the house in Campbell Street, and the canny neighbours began to talk, and the married women lost no opportunity of impressing upon the upholsterer the fact that his daughter should be wedded with as little delay as possible.

Shaw was fond of Catherine, but it was a big undertaking to look after her, and he admitted to himself that he would not be sorry to fix the responsibility upon another and a younger man. But the man had to be caught. He passed in review the available members of his acquaintance.

"There's Jock Macpherson—he's too fond of the bottle,

and Sandy McPhail has no siller. Donald Cathie is a good lad, but he's got his mother and sisters to keep, and though he cares for Catherine, I know she can't abear his womenfolk. Then there's the McDowd and Mr. John Ellis and—— I have it!" he suddenly exclaimed, as the vision of a tall, dark, austere-looking man flashed across his brain—"I have it! Alexander Robertson—that's the husband for Mistress Catherine Shaw!" And, highly pleased with himself at the result of his ruminations, he put on his hat and cloak and sallied forth to the Tolbooth, in which neighbourhood his prospective son-in-law resided.

This Robertson was the only son of a man who had been very friendly with Shaw's father, and was fairly well endowed with this world's goods. He was thirty-eight years of age, and so older than Catherine by two decades, but he had always shown a liking for the pretty child, and that liking, when the child developed into a lovely young woman, ripened into love. In fact, the severe and puritanical Robertson worshipped Catherine. He mistook her little confidences and familiarities—the girl had known him since she was eight years old—for tokens of affection, and, behind that, with

Repea'ed blows on the door.

her father's aid, he could make this fair, wayward, haughty young beauty his wife. Secretly, Alexander was a sensual man, though he himself scarcely knew it. All he knew was that he was animated with a longing to seize this fairy-like being and crush her in his arms, to smother his face in her red-gold tresses, to kiss her lips, her eyes, her ears, and to know that all her charms were for him alone. Such was the frame of mind of Alexander Robertson when William Shaw came to him with a proposal that he should marry Catherine.

Now, in spite of the admiring eyes at church, the notes begging for appointments, and the presents, Catherine Shaw was no coquette. She did not dislike all this admiration—what girl would?—but she valued it at just as much as it was worth. For Catherine was in love—yes, really and truly in love. Living near Campbell Street—how often did she pass the little dark shop!—was a working jeweller of the name of John Lanson. He was twenty-five years of age, tall and stalwart, with fair hair and honest blue eyes. His bearing was upright, his prospects fair, and his character good. No one had a word to say against John Lanson. But Shaw had known him for some time, and had taken a furious dislike to the young jeweller. Perhaps—it is not unlikely—his dislike arose out of his daughter's liking for his company, which became increasingly evident as time went on. This was wrong of Shaw, but I am not setting him up as a hero, though he certainly died the death of a martyr.

Catherine used to meet John Lanson, and they had been seen together, he with his arm round her supple waist, she with her hand upon his shoulder, on the far-famed Calton Hill, in the quietest corners and the shadiest nooks. When the girl went to church alone, as she did occasionally in the week, John Lanson would be seen to walk with her to the door and to carry her books for her, going and coming. All this came to the ears of Shaw, and he waxed exceedingly angry. Robertson had agreed to marry Catherine; Catherine had refused his hand indignantly, and John Lanson was, she declared, the one man to whom she would give her hand. This was the position of affairs on May 26, 1721, a day never to be forgotten in the annals of Scottish crime. In the afternoon of that day a stormy interview took place between William and Catherine Shaw. The former upbraided the girl in the severest terms for the cavalier treatment she had accorded Robertson, and bade her consent to marry that worthy without further ado. Catherine, equally self-willed and roused to bitter determination by reason of her new-found love, reiterated her unalterable intention of marrying young Lanson and no other.

"I would sooner see you dead than married to him," said the father, angrily striking the table with his clenched fist. "What! Are chits of girls to thus defy their father's express wishes, and frustrate their dearest hopes? By heaven, madam, marry Robertson you shall! I've given him my word, and no girl, even his own child, shall make a cheat of William Shaw!"

"And I am resolute to marry John," the girl replied, with spirit. "You may beat me, starve me, kill me; I am sworn to John, and only he shall have me!"

Further words passed between them, and their voices, raised so angrily, at length attracted the attention of some of their neighbours resident in the same building. These persons came to the foot of the stairs, and listened to the verbal battle raging within. Nothing that Mr. Shaw could say and nothing that he could threaten appeared in any way to weaken the resolution of his daughter. Only now and again could the listeners catch the drift of the angry dualogue; but they distinctly heard the ominous words, "cruelty," "barbarity," and "death." At length the disputants seemed to grow weary of the altercation, and the neighbours, thinking that a reconciliation would soon come about, stole away upstairs to their own habitations. About five minutes later, the door of the apartment in which Shaw and his daughter had been disputing was hastily slammed, and then locked from the outside. Shaw emerged just afterwards from the front door and strode down the stone steps leading to the street. One who there encountered him said that "he looked wild and dishevelled, his eyes were bloodshot, his countenance ashen, and his hair askew. He pushed past me, and so into the street."

Such portions of the quarrel as he had overheard seemed to have greatly impressed one Morrison, a watch-case maker, who would appear to have conjectured that something was seriously wrong. A silence had followed the hurried departure of Shaw; but this man's half-formed suspicions were confirmed when he heard horrid groans issuing from Shaw's dwelling, and apparently from the very room in which the dispute had taken place. He forced the front door, and, having called in some of the neighbours, they listened outside this particular chamber, and all distinctly heard the moans of some human being in the acutest pain and distress. Presently, still listening and beside themselves with fear, they heard the voice of Catherine Shaw. With evident effort and in faint tones, she exclaimed bitterly, "Cruel father, thou art the cause of my death!" A few low moans followed the utterance of these words, and then silence fell again. At once Mor-

rison decided to force an entrance, and this was done by repeated blows on the door with a heavy axe. Others of the neighbours fetched two constables—they were not called constables then—and then the whole party entered the room. A fearful spectacle presented itself before them.

Catherine Shaw lay on the floor, close to the large, old-fashioned chimney-place. She was on her side and weltering in her life's blood. A large knife lay close at hand, and its appearance denoted that with it the horrid act had been done. She had a deep stab in the side, and another between the breasts, and from both wounds blood was pouring in torrents. Even to the inexperienced eyes of the spectators she was on the point of death. She was quite unable to articulate; but when asked if she owed her injuries to her father, she made a motion with her head, as if to answer in the affirmative, and instantly expired.

At that very moment Shaw came in. The frightened neighbours gave way for him, and he rushed into the centre of the room, to find his child a corpse. He was seized with horror, and evinced the most frightful agitation. He would have flung himself upon the body if he had not been restrained, and he gave, as an old chronicle says, "the liveliest expression of his grief." Unfortunately, his horrified demeanour was only construed as further evidence of his guilt, and he was seized and arrested as the murderer. He admitted the quarrel with his daughter, but solemnly avowed that he had done her no harm, and that he had left her alive and well. The poor girl's own dying words were quoted against him, and he was hurried off to prison, followed by a huge and infuriated crowd. John Lanson and Alexander Robertson had both heard the dreadful news, and were frantic with grief; but, whereas the latter declared his belief in the innocence of the accused, the favoured of Catherine's suitors made no secret of his rage against Shaw and confidence in his guilt.

At the prison the frenzied man, robbed of his daughter by an untimely death, and accused of her murder, was stripped and searched, and stains of recent blood were found upon his shirt. For this damning fact he accounted by declaring that he had been "blooded" two days before, and that the bandages had come undone. He was not believed, however, and he was universally credited with the murder of his unfortunate child. Her youth and beauty enlisted popular feeling on her behalf, and rage against the miserable Shaw ran proportionately high.

The trial came on for hearing in July, 1721, and the case, of which no very full account exists, excited great local interest. Shaw stoutly maintained his innocence, and appears to have made a spirited defence; but the circumstances against him could not be explained away, and their full significance was deadly. He was found guilty, and actually hanged—in chains—at Leith Walk, Edinburgh, on July 14, 1721, his last recorded words being, "I am innocent of my daughter's murder."

THE DEATH OF CATHERINE.

A more terrible judicial error was never committed, and God did not permit the truth to be withheld, though it was revealed too late to save the life of this victim to the fallibility of human judgment and circumstantial evidence.

Exactly a year after the execution of William Shaw, a man who had taken his apartments discovered in an alcove of the chimney near to which the girl had been found lying, into which cavity it had apparently accidentally fallen, a piece of paper folded as a letter. He opened this document, and read as follows:

"Barbarous father!

"Your cruelty in having put it out of my power to ever join my fate to that of the only man I could love, and tyrannically insisting on my marrying one whom I have always hated, has made me form a resolution to put an end to an existence which is become a burden to me.

"CATHERINE SHAW."

The writing was incontestably proved to have been that of the dead girl, and it was now clear that she had committed suicide during the interval of time between the departure and return of her unfortunate father.

What could be done? The grief expressed was universal; but all the grief and remorse in the world could not bring back the murdered William Shaw to life. His body was removed from the gibbet and given to his family for interment. Flags were waved over the new grave, and prominent officials and dignitaries of the

The discovery of Catherine's letter.

northern capital attended the funeral rites in token that Shaw's innocence was now recognised by all.

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There is a sad and singular sequel to this story of love and passion. From the day of Catherine's death John Lanson was an altered man. He became morose and taciturn, and refused to speak when addressed by some old friend or neighbour. He neglected his trade, and took to drinking heavily. In the winter of the year 1726 he was found dead upon the grave which held the poor remains of Catherine Shaw, and the exact cause of his demise was never ascertained. Nor was Alexander Robertson's fate less tragic. He took up arms, in company with others discontented like himself, against the English Government, and was killed in an affray at Berwick.

Guilty or Not Guilty.

AT a recent assize in Donegal a man—he was a Milesian, needless to say—was being tried for burglary with violence.

When asked if he pleaded "Not guilty," the prisoner observed, "Sure, I can't answer that question."

"Do you plead 'guilty,' then?" the Clerk of the Court persisted.

"Ah, an' begorrah!" said the accused, "how can I say till I hear the evidence? Be jabers! git on with the case!"

An Employer of Labour.

'HOW do you live? What is your occupation?" asked a magistrate of a rather hardened-looking prisoner.

"Me? I'm an employer of labour," was the rather startling rejoinder.

"Well, what do you do? Come, out with it!"

"I find employment for prison officials and gents like yourself, for instance."

Maximum sentence!

Why William Lees was Hanged.

Maddened by Drink and Jealousy he Slew his Wife.

"Trifles light as air
Are to the jealous confirmations strong
As proofs of holy writ."
—SHAKESPEARE, "Othello," Act III., Sc. 3.

I AM a murderer!" This was the dreadful announcement that William Lees startled his sister, Mrs. Bailey, with, on the afternoon of Monday, November 18th, 1839. Sarah Bailey stood aghast.

'Yes, I am a murderer," continued Lees, as he glared round on his brother, John Lees, and his brother-in-law, Ben Bailey, who were with Mrs. Bailey in the back parlour of a mean house in York Street, St. Luke's.

"Here is the key—the key—the key!" he added, handing a door key to his sister, who was half fainting. Then he kissed Ben Bailey, and handed him a new rope. Again he shouted, "I am a murderer!" For a moment or two his hearers thought he was mad, for his eyes started out of his head, the veins in his forehead were swollen, and his whole appearance was alarming.

"Come and see, all of you. Come and see, Sarah," he went on, catching hold of his sister round the waist.

Sarah Bailey put on her bonnet, and, accompanied by John Lees and his wife, who came in at that moment, went with William. As they got opposite St. Luke's Madhouse, William Lees again caught hold of his sister and exclaimed, "A murderer!—a murderer!" This was too much for the poor woman, and she became so weak that a coach had to be called, into which the whole party got, and drove to the corner of Chapman Street, where William Lees kept a barber's shop. They then got out, but Mrs. Bailey was so overcome that she went with Mrs. Lees into a greengrocer's shop to rest a little, while the two brothers went into the Chapman's Arms public-house. There William ordered a pint of half-and-half, and two pipes of tobacco, and sat with his brother smoking for a while.

When John Lees thought that the women were sufficiently rested, he went across to the greengrocer's and fetched them, meeting William at the door of the public-house. The whole party then went to William's shop in Chapman Street. Mrs. Bailey tried to unlock the door with the key her brother had given her, but could not; then John Lees tried, and was successful. Mrs. Lees waited outside, and the other three entered. It was dark in the house, for it was nearly five o'clock, and nothing could be seen. William Lees went to fetch a light, and while he was gone Mrs. Bailey began to feel about on the floor. Suddenly she gave a little scream. She had touched a human hand, which was stiff, but not quite cold.

William then entered with a light, and the horror-stricken party saw his wife, Elizabeth, weltering in blood, stretched on the floor of the shop. Mrs. Bailey began to chafe the hands of the poor woman, but William stopped her, remarking: "Oh, she's dead. She's quite dead."

All then left the shop, closing the door after them, the women to return to their own home, and William and John

Lees to the Chapman's Arms. Only when inside the public-house did John realise what had happened. Then he seized his brother by the collar and said:

"Bill, you shall not go. You are a murderer; you have murdered your wife!"

A man named Kaines was in the bar at the time, and, hearing this, looked at William Lees, and noticed that he had blood on his shirt and on his left hand. He had known both the Lees for some time, and could not believe that William was a murderer. However, he told the landlord that he would fetch a policeman, and went out. First of all, however, he thought that he would make certain that a crime had been committed, and went to Lees's house, where he found the two women still crying on the doorstep, and saying that they were too much afraid to go home alone. Kaines comforted them, and then called a constable, with whom he re-entered the Chapman's Arms. The landlord there said that the two brothers had fought, and that William had run out, going in the direction of another public-house called the Reindeer.

"Come along!" shouted Kaines to the policeman, and

Stretched on the floor.

the pair ran off to the Reindeer, where they were told that William Lees had passed through the house and was walking up James's Street, towards the Commercial Road. At the junction of the two roads they came up with the fugitive, and the constable wanted to take him into custody.

"Don't let the policeman touch me, Kaines!" exclaimed Lees. "I will go with you wherever you wish." So Kaines took charge of the prisoner, and, with the constable following close behind him, led him to the station-house, where he was charged with murder.

Other police were despatched to the shop in Chapman Street, and there they saw the corpse of Elizabeth Lees lying in a huge pool of blood on the ground. Attached to a beam across the ceiling they also found an old rope, with a noose in it, as if the murderer had contemplated suicide, and near the body was a blood-stained razor. A doctor was summoned to examine the remains, and found that in all there were eight wounds about the head and neck, one nearly severing the head from the body, one dividing the large arteries in the face, and one, a punctured wound caused by a "jab" with the point of the razor, which must have required great violence to inflict. It was impossible for it to be a case of suicide, for if the throat were cut first the other wounds could not have been inflicted, nor could the throat have been cut by a person who had previously sustained the other wounds, though they would not have been immediately fatal.

Now, what had led up to this foul and bloody murder which William Lees admitted to his sister that he had committed? The prisoner had been married to his wife Elizabeth for some ten years, and during that time both parties had been addicted to drink. When Mrs. Lees was the worse for liquor she was very violent, and, as a rule, her husband took little notice of her, but when he had had a drop too much he sometimes became quarrelsome.

During the two years which immediately preceded the murder, Mrs. Lees had been in the habit of staying out very late at night, and on more than one occasion Lees had been heard accusing his wife of misconduct with other men, a charge which she indignantly repudiated. None the less, Lees became jealous, and every day saw the breach widen between husband and wife. Four days before the murder, Lees and his wife had a serious quarrel, the subject of infidelity being the cause of it, and Lees again asserted that his wife was not as good as she ought to be. The quarrel grew violent, and at last Mrs. Lees jumped out of the window, fearing that her husband might hurt her.

On the day of the tragedy, Mrs. Lees commenced drinking early in the morning, but she did not take more than was good for her, a sudden attack of hysteria checking her in the middle of her potations, and forcing her to send for Dr. Garrett, who gave her a soothing draught. That was at about two in the afternoon. Lees was present at the time, and, as far as the doctor and the neighbours who came in could see, he was treating his wife with extraordinary kindness. At about half-past two a neighbour heard sounds of a squabble, and Lees came out and stood at the door of his shop. A passer-by spoke to him, and he replied that the missis was in the tantrums again. On that the good lady rushed out, caught her spouse by the collar, and commenced to beat him. The couple went inside and closed the door.

About three Lees came out of his house, and was seen by a neighbour, to whom he said that Mrs. Lees was very ill, having taken some strong acid, and he was going to fetch a woman to sit with her. He did not enter his house again till he came at five o'clock with his brother and sister.

After leaving the shop, Lees went and called on a brother barber named Clark, to whom he showed the new rope which he had in his pocket, but said nothing about the murder. He appeared to have been drinking. He also spent some time with a man named Stowe in a public-house, and to him he said that his wife had just died of delirium tremens, and that the doctors were going to perform a post-mortem examination.

In due course William Lees was arraigned at the Old Bailey, and pleaded "Not guilty." The above evidence was given, and the doctor was closely cross-examined as to the possibility of the wounds being self-inflicted, but he was firm in his decision that it was utterly impossible. The only defence was that the prisoner was subject to fits at times, and had on two occasions attempted his own life, once by cutting his head with a rusty knife, and another time by trying to brain himself with a hammer. As much as possible was made of his distracted state when he called on his sister, but the efforts of his counsel were unavailing, and a verdict of "Guilty" was returned.

In the course of the trial it was shown that when Mrs. Lees was out late at night she had been with her mother, and not in the society of men.

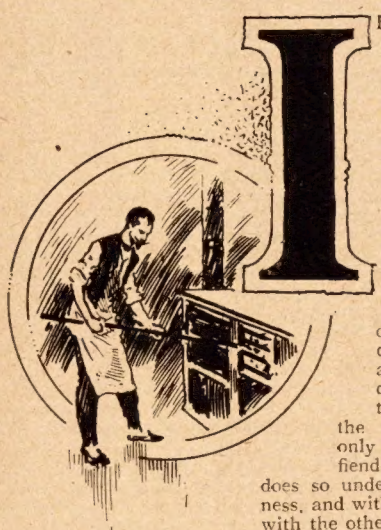
The customary sentence being passed, Lees was brought out in front of the Old Bailey on December 16th, 1839, for execution.

He confessed his guilt, saying that his wife was unfaithful to him, and frequently was violent to him when intoxicated. On the day of the tragedy she had knocked him about, and in a fit of passion he had picked up the nearest razor and made a slash at her. The cut nearly took off her lower lip. He then threw her and hacked away at her till she was dead. Filled with remorse, he made preparations to commit suicide, but he feared that the old rope was not strong enough, so he went out and bought a new rope. He then changed his mind and went to his sister to tell her of the murder. He was sorry he had killed his wife, who was kind to him when sober. After the usual prayers for Divine mercy, the bolt was drawn, and Lees was left suspended. Death was not immediate, the body being violently convulsed for some minutes, then with a gasp Lees expired. Thus ended William Lees, a victim to drink and unreasoning jealousy.

Pel and his Poison.

How a Frenchman studied poisoning as a science and experimented on many women.

"One science only will one genius fit."
—POPE, "Essay on Criticism."



IF there is one form of criminal whose diabolical arts it is more difficult to guard against than any other it is the poisoner. The very nature of his crime is secret, for on his secrecy the insidious slayer depends for his success. Moreover, the poisoner is generally hidden under the guise of a near and dear relation, such a one as would have access to the kitchen of his victims, and this makes his crime the more heinous. Not only does he commit a fiendish murder, but he does so under the cloak of kindness, and with one hand kills while with the other he pretends to allay the sufferings of his victim.

For this reason the poisoner is always regarded with more detestation than is the good old-fashioned stabber, who, seized with the lust for blood, brutally assaults the person whom he wishes to slay, and revels in his act. At least the gory ruffian is an open enemy, and as such can often be avoided.

In the ranks of poisoners a few names stand out as masters of the devilish art which they practised. In England we have had Palmer, Neil Cream, Dr. Lamson, Dr. Cross and others, who have paid the last penalty of the scaffold in expiation of their crimes. France has its Auriol, Italy the Borgias; and, indeed, in every country can be found criminals who have reduced poisoning to a fine art. Few, however, have really made their lives subservient to their desire to secretly slay their fellows in the same way that Albert Pel did. From his earliest childhood poisons had a terrible fascination for him, and he devoted years of study to the drugs which interested him so fatally.

Albert Pel was the son of humble working people who dwelt in the little town of Moutiers, in Savoy. Shortly after his birth his parents separated, and young Albert was left in the custody of his father, but when that individual proved himself utterly incapable of taking charge of his son the French Law Courts handed the baby over to the mother. He was born in 1849, and little is heard of him for the first twenty years of his life save that he was a very studious youth, given to solitude and to the study of chemistry. When quite a schoolboy he established a laboratory for himself and sometimes would shut himself up in it for days, only receiving his food through a small trap in the door. He gave out that he was perfecting an invention, but in reality he was studying poisons in all their aspects.

For the purposes of study Albert Pel purchased rabbits, cats, dogs and any other animals that he could afford, and these were experimented upon in the silence of the laboratory. His labours in the thorny path of toxicological research were unwearying, and shortly after his twentieth birthday he was able to announce that he had at last discovered a poison which would kill speedily and leave no trace behind it.

In 1869 he went to Paris with his mother, and started business for himself as a watchmaker in the Rue Rochechouart. He was far from skilful at his trade, and his receipts from his shop were inconsiderable. Had he really attended to the business he might have done well, but he was too occupied with his poisons to pay any real attention to anything so uninteresting as watchmaking.

Among his acquaintances he acquired a fine reputation as a liar, and many were the stories told about him and about his vain boasting.

After a couple of years spent in Paris, and in testing his poison, Pel decided that the time had come when his specific should be tried on some human being, and as he was naturally averse to unremunerative labour, he thought that it would be as well if he made the first experiment on some person who had a little money which he could seize if his surmise as to the action of his drug was correct. He had absolutely no heart, and knowing that his mother was possessed of a paltry eight thousand francs, he determined to give her a dose of his secret preparation and possess himself of her little store of wealth.

In a day or two Madame Pel was taken ill. She had always been delicate, but now to her ordinary infirmities was added a gnawing pain in the bowels. Alarmed, she sent for a friend named Mdlle. Reichenbach, and at the same time begged her son to send for a doctor. Albert declared that he had already done so, though as a matter of fact he had not the least intention of permitting any medical man to interfere with his great experiment.

Daily Madame Pel grew worse, and to all her entreaties to see a doctor the son returned evasive answers. Mdlle. Reichenbach also asked Albert to see that his mother had proper medical attendance, and was told that the doctor had only just left the house. "He won't come again, for things will be better to-morrow," he added as the visitor went away. Next day Mdlle. Reichenbach called to inquire after her sick friend, and was greeted by Albert with the simple announcement, "Ca y est"—"That's all over." Astonished, the lady again asked what news there was of her friend, and received the same reply. Further inquiry elicited the fact that Madame Pel had died during the night.

Albert Pel was perfectly composed. His experiment had been a success, and the mere loss of his mother troubled him very little. All natural affection seemed dead in him. For all that he professed a great respect for the body of his victim, and when Mdlle. Reichenbach offered to lay out the corpse he was horrified, and declared that no one should lay a hand on the remains of his mother. A coffin was ordered, and into it Pel lifted the remains of his mother, burying her

She went out heavily veiled.

with all her clothes on, exactly in the state in which she had died.

It was known that Madame Pel had left eight thousand francs, and Pel was questioned about this money, but he said that his mother had kept all her savings sewn up in the hem of her petticoat and that he had buried them with her.

Life of Charles Peace.

CHAPTER XLVI. (Continued.)

A CAB was hailed, and the three playgoers were conveyed to their destination. Peace parted with Miss Stanbridge at the door of her house, and returned home on foot to his rooms in Leather Lane.

Miss Stanbridge poured evil words into the ear of the boy, who listened to them greedily. He was ambitious in mind—he was dishonest in heart. He longed to be one who was known and feared while he was alive, and who should be spoken of and written of after he was dead.

Upon his return home, Alf Purvis missed Mrs. Grover.

He asked his mistress what had become of her.

"She has gone away," said Miss Stanbridge. "I had set my mind on something, and she was foolish enough to oppose me."

"Oh," murmured Alf, "I'm sorry for that."

* * * * * * *

After the attempted robbery at the jeweller's, Peace had deemed it advisable to leave his quarters for awhile.

He took the precaution, also, of altering his appearance as much as possible, and to carry this into effect he had made a suit of clothes dissimilar in every respect to those he was accustomed to wear; but, to say the truth, all these arrangements were quite needless, for the police had never had the faintest clue to the real culprit, and in a short time gave the matter up as hopeless.

Indeed, to say the truth, they were so ashamed of their own want of foresight, that they were but too glad to let the recollection of blundering die out as speedily as possible.

The constable who had but recently joined the force was made a scapegoat by his companions, who threw all the blame upon him.

He was reprimanded by the superintendent, who enjoined him to be more careful for the future.

The young fellow promised not to make such a mistake again if he could help it, and justice was satisfied, and the majesty of the law vindicated.

Peace's coat and hat, which had been left behind at the jeweller's, were for some time in charge of the police. When all hope of finding its owner had been given up the garments in question were conveyed to what is termed the "Black Museum" in Scotland Yard.

This place is one of the sights of London, but it is rare indeed that any stranger is admitted into its sacred precincts. The uninitiated may possibly feel some interest in a description of this receptacle for criminal curiosities.

We subjoin an account of the place, which the reader may rest assured is genuine.

"Take care how you step," said a courteous official, who preceded the visitor up a staircase in one of the houses in Scotland Yard, and opened a door on an upper storey.

"We are obliged to throw a great deal of this about." The substance in question was a disinfecting powder.

The room into which we were conducted was a large bare-floored apartment, with barred windows, fitted up with wide shelves, which were divided into compartments, and their contents were liberally sprinkled with the all-pervading powder.

The room is that in which the articles of property taken from convicts are stowed away until they are claimed by their owners.

Of course there was not much chance of anyone coming forward to claim Peace's hat and coat from the stand in the centre of this receptacle of the objects of the "unlawful possessor" class, to which a large room upstairs is also devoted.

Overhead is the "Black Museum," in which during the last three years pièces de conviction, which until then had been kept indiscriminately with the other property of criminals, have been arranged and labelled, forming a ghastly, squalid, and suggestive show.

On entering the lower room the visitor is struck by its odd resemblance to a seed shop.

Hundreds of hooks stud the rims of the shelves and the sides of the compartments, and from them are suspended hundreds of little packets neatly made up in brown paper, tied with white twine, and severally distinguished by large parchment labels, each bearing a neat inscription.

The packets contain small articles taken from the prisoners, who in due course, after they are discharged from prison will be brought to Scotland Yard, and their portraits taken by force should they object to that process.

The larger things are deposited in the compartments of the shelves, and every item, no matter how insignificant, is entered into the proper register.

A motley collection are the larger articles, with a preponderance among them of grimy pocket-books and greasy purses.

But there are valuable things in some of those parcels, and downstairs in the officials' room is a massive iron safe, fitted with sliding shelves, in which is kept a large collection of watches, rings, choice pins, scent bottles, pencil-cases, and other jewellery, which are either the lawful property of prisoners or have been found in their unlawful possession and confiscated, but for whom no owners have been discovered.

Among the watches are some beautiful specimens. One in particular, taken from a costermonger, of exquisite workmanship and ornamentation, is valued at fifty pounds.

The prisoners' property room is scrupulously clean and tidy, but the look of it is forlorn and squalid, the powder lying thick on everything, and the scent of moth and rot is in the air.

Great bales of cloth and woollen stuff occupy the shelves of the central stand.

They are shaken and beaten and turned, but all to no avail; the moth and rot get at them, and the unwholesome weirdness peculiar to once worn but long unused garments is upon the articles of wearing apparel which are hung or folded up in the room.

This impression comes more strongly upon the visitor when he goes up higher still into the topmost apartment, where heaps of clothing hang upon the walls—some new, some worn.

The heaps of shawls have a draggled and furtive look, but some children's clothing has a touch of its inseparable prettiness, even here.

Old books, a picture or two, some worthless table ornaments, innumerable articles which could not be described or classed except as odds and ends, form a portion of the collection, which goes on accumulating, and which has no ultimate destination.

What is to become of all this? asks the visitor, and is answered, to his surprise, that nobody knows, that the things are nobody's property, and nobody has the power to do anything with them.

A piece of information which makes them more ghastly and nightmare-like to the imagination than before.

An ever-growing dust heap formed of thieves' clothing and unlawful possessions, which nobody can cart away to distribute or bury out of sight for evermore—an accumulating banquet spread for the moth, the rust, and the rat—the contents of these rooms are far from pleasant to think of.

It seems supremely ridiculous, but it is a fact, that nothing but a legislative measure could rid the premises of these rotting garments, out of every fold of which one might shake with the dust an image of squalor, crime, and punishment.

Outside the door of the "Black Museum" is a shelf in the wall of the landing place.

The visitor passing it is aware of a huddled heap of dirty coats, a serge gown, and a coarse kind of rug—the skin of an animal, with red and white hair upon it.

Under the shelf, on the floor, lies some rough packing cloth.

He passes the heap carelessly, and enters the museum.

What are his first impressions of it?

They are various. That it is like a bit out of a gamekeeper's room, with a bigger bit out of a smith's forge, a touch of a carpenter's workshop, a broad suggestion of a harness-room, something of a marine store complexion (and a good deal of its odour), a lump of an open-air stall in front of a pawnbroker's shop, a little of the barrack-room gun-rack, with no bright barrels, also a general air of a lumber-room, with just a dash of an anatomical museum; but above all, and increasing with every moment's prolonged observation, a likeness to the cutlery booth in a foreign fair, the articles being so rusty that the said booth might have been shut up for full half-a-century, and the salesman and his customers all ghosts.

Opposite the door, and on the face of the wall to the right, are displayed on a wooden shelf with iron rings, which convey to the visitor a hint of the open-air stall in front of a pawnshop in a very small way of business indeed, a common looking-glass in a wooden frame, four black glass buttons, two wisps of rope, a pair of trumpery ear-rings in card-box, two bullets, a pipe, a cluster of soft, light brown hair wound round a pad, a comb, a pocket-knife, and a little wooden stand covered with glass—these are noticeable articles. On the shelf to the right are a dirty prayer-book, a pocket dictionary, a pair of boots, a gaudy bag worked in beads, and the crushed remains of a woman's bonnet, made of the commonest black lace, and flattened into shapelessness.

In both these instances the other impressions of the place came in, too, for over the shelf fronting the door hung workmen's tools, hammer, and cleaver, and spade, and beside them to the right is just such a bundle as adorns the walls of a marine store. It consists of a gown, a petticoat of cheap, poor stuff, bearing dreadful dim stains, and a tattered crinoline.

The visitor is in the presence of the objects which perpetuate the memory of two peculiarly horrible crimes.

The soft, brown hair is that of Harriet Lane, murdered by Wainwright; the buttons and the earrings are those which were found in the earth where her body had been buried.

The bullets were taken out of her skull. The object under the glass case is the several pieces of her skin which completed the identification of her body. The wisps of rope dragged her out of the earth under the warehouse; the cleaver, the hammer, and spade are the implements with which the horrible deed, which led to Wainwright's detection, was done.

The knife was Thomas Wainwright's, the pipe was Henry's, and when the visitor is leaving the museum he will be shown in the pack-cloth on the floor under the shelf outside the door the wrapper in which the dismembered body was packed, and one of the dirty coats—a horrid thing, with its hideous rents and smears—Wainwright's vesture on the occasion.

The coat of the captain of the "Lennie," with the gash in the cloth, torn by the knife of his murderer, and eaten through and through with rot and moth, is not nearly so disgusting an object; and as for the serge robe of that poor rogue, "Professor Zandavesta," and the little cloak of the confiscated "anatomical" wax African, who grins awfully in one corner of the museum, a real skeleton hand and arm considerately hidden behind them, they are quite cheerful to look at in comparison.

The prayer-book and the other pitiful objects upon the shelf to the right were found on the body of Maria Clousen, who was murdered in Kidbrook Lane; the blood and mud-stained clothes were hers, and they contrast with grim irony as evidences of an unpunished crime, with the all-gory objects which tell of one brother hanged and the other transported.

Along the wall, on the right side of the room, is ranged a choice collection of guns, crowbars, and "jemmies," the latter implements of the house-breaking industry, which admit of great variety, and are susceptible of highly artistic handling; and among them is a pair of tongs unevenly rusted, and with a dirty paper book written all over with incoherent sentences attached to it.

The tongs are those with which a man named Macdonald killed his wife some years ago. He was hanged, as also were many of te proprietors of the horrid labelled assortment of hammers, knives, including the bread-carving and pocket varieties, razors and pistols which suggest a booth in a fair.

There is dried blood on all the knives and razors, and some of the hammers also, and every one of them stands for a murder or suicide.

In a terrible number of cases they record the murder of a wife by her husband.

Several of the pistols, mostly beautiful weapons, are the instruments of suicide, and each is labelled with the name, date, and place.

The simple suicides are almost all among the higher class of society; and when the visitor asks how the pistol, with which a gentleman of wealth and station shot himself, came into the keeping of the museum, he is told:

"The family mostly do not like to have it, and so they ask the police to take it away."

In a corner hang the clothes of the Rev. J. Watson, who murdered his wife at Stockwell, the horse-pistol with which he shot her, and the heavy hammer with which he knocked the nails into the chest, in which he proposed to hide her body.

So carefully had the murderer washed his trousers and his coat-sleeves, that the blood-stains could only be observed with difficulty at the time of the investigation.

But since the coat and trousers have been hanging on the Black Museum's walls, the stains have come out again.

"We have often noticed that," the visitor is told.

The frightful weapons used by the "Lennie" mutineers are here neatly ranged under the photograph of the ringleader, "French Peter."

Hard-by is a bundle of letters, forming the correspondence which furnished much of the evidence against Margaret Waters, the baby-farmer.

How much sin, shame, sorrow, and cruelty that small, dusty bundle represents, it would be hard to say.

A small billycock hat, with a mask fastened inside the broad rim, into which is packed a purse, a comforter, a small lantern, and a life-preserver with a terrific lump of lead on it, is quite a cheerful object to turn to from all these grim relics of worse crimes, though the burglar who formerly owned the life-preserver informed the police—who seized but also rescued him, having come up upon hearing his cries when he was caught between the iron bars of a window, through which he was escaping on a false alarm—that he had thoroughly intended to "do for" anyone who should interrupt him with that convenient weapon.

A large assortment of burglars' tools is not the least suggestive object here.

The weapons of the thieves' war upon society are models of good workmanship, and of the adaptation of means to ends.

When the neatest "centre-bit" of the carpenter's shop is compared with the deft, swift, noiselessly-working instrument which goes into an iron shutter as a cheesemonger's scoop goes into a "fresh Dutch"; when one looks at the wedges of finely-tempered steel working between the zinc side-bits; at the two home-made dark lanterns, contrived with extraordinary cleverness out of a mustard tin and metal match-box respectively; at the rope ladder and the "beautiful little jemmy," in a carefully buttoned red flannel case—this small, powerful tool is made of a piece of a driving wheel belonging to the finest machinery, and the metal was, of course, stolen to make it; at the bright, slender, skeleton keys; at the safe-breaking tools—which make one think that there is nothing like the old stocking in the thatch after all—one is amazed at and sorry for the misused cleverness and perverted inventiveness to which these things testify.

Among the skeleton keys is one delicate little contrivance which, at a first glance, one might take for an ornament to a lady's chatelaine; it is, in fact, a double instrument for picking latch keyholes, one part forming the key and the other lifting the spring.

This pretty trifle was made from the brass clasp of a purse, and used with such success by the inventor that in a short time he found himself in prison.

While one is actually inside the Black Museum one cannot be amused at anything, but by the time we have turned into the Strand the impression of the dreary reliquary of crime has so far passed away that one can smile at the story told of the impudent simplicity of this poor clever thief.

"When he was discharged from prison," said the curator of the Black Museum, as he restored the delicate dangling little bit of villainy to its place, the man came here and asked us to let him have it back."

CHAPTER XLVII.

In a few days Peace returned to his lodgings. He was informed by the gipsy that all was going on well. No stranger had been to Leather Lane to inquire for the industrious and exemplary frame-maker.

"And so, old man, you needn't bother yourself any more," cried the gipsy.

"There will be no more stir in the matter. But you've done me a good turn, Bill, and I shan't forget it. How are you getting on?"

"How? Much the same as usual—anyhow. But I'm not driven so much in a corner as I have been once or twice in my life. I do a little with horses, and have got a swell as'll fork out a couple of quid or so when I'm regularly hard up.

He's a rum sort, though. I can't quite reckon him up; he's so 'nation sly and mysterious. He it was who set me to work to prig the jewels at the Carved Lion. My eye, wasn't he riled when he heard of the end o' that night's business; and it was all through you, you beggar," cried the gipsy, with a laugh. "But, Lord love ye, I don't think any the worse on ye for it—not a morsel."

"Oh!" murmured Peace; "he set you to work to get the jewels, did he?"

"Yes."

"I wonder what that was for?"

"I don't know."

"But I think I do."

"You don't mean that?"

"Yes, I do. They were the chief evidence in proof of Aveline Gatliffe's identity, and this swell, whoever he may be, has reason for not wishing that identity to be established. Who and what is he?"

"Well, that I am not at liberty to make known," returned the gipsy. "He's a swell in his way, but he ain't of much account as far as I can learn—leastways, he's a hot 'un in many ways, so I've been told. I met him by chance when I was with my first gov'nor, and he weren't much to boast on."

"Oh, he has a motive, depend upon that, and a strong one, too, I should say; but it matters not—it does not concern either of us."

"Not a bit."

Peace and the gipsy had now become what might be termed cronies or pals. To say the truth, the latter had displayed a considerable amount of faithfulness and disinterested friendship for our hero—much more than he really deserved.

In the afternoon of that day "Bandy-legged Bill" brought round his pony trap and took Peace out for a drive.

During this little excursion our hero had an eye to business. He never failed to look out for houses which he thought best adapted to his purpose. He preferred those which stood in their own grounds, detached from any others, and those also that were not near the high road, along which a policeman might be passing.

While out with the gipsy his attention was attracted to a handsome residence situated in the neighbourhood of Denmark Hill.

He noticed the place, and as he did so promised himself the pleasure of paying it a visit at no distant day, or rather night.

The gipsy, who had noticed the attention he had given to the house, pointed with his whip to the habitation in question and said jocularly:

"The very place for you, old man—eh?"

Peace nodded.

"It's a tempting-looking crib, I must confess," he murmured.

"And is occupied by some wealthy bloke, I'll wager," said the gipsy.

"Oh, I dare say. No doubt."

"I ain't good at that sort of business, but I'll drive you here any night you like, and wait for you with the trap till the job's done. Of course for a consideration," observed the gipsy, with great gravity; "business is business all the world over."

GRASPING THE REVOLVER IN HIS RIGHT HAND.

"You shan't go unrewarded, Bill."

"I don't expect half, but I must have something."

"Agreed. To-morrow night will do."

"Will it? Then I'm your man."

This little matter being settled, the two friends parted at the corner of Leather Lane, the gipsy promising to call for Peace at half-past ten or from that to eleven o'clock on the following night.

In tracing the lawless career of a great criminal like Charles Peace it is not requisite to trouble the reader with a full description of all his depredations. The leading events in his career it is our business to chronicle.

As a rule he committed most of his daring burglaries without the assistance of confederates or accomplices; but this was not always the case. In the earlier part of his life he had many lawless companions. At Sheffield and Manchester he was associated with a band of desperadoes. The burglary we are about to describe was not undertaken alone,

as possibly it was for this reason Peace had made one or two signal failures, and in consequence had escaped in a most marvellous manner on both occasions.

He therefore gladly accepted the service of the gipsy, in whom he felt he could place implicit confidence

From a psychological point of view the character of Peace presents rather a curious study.

He seems to have been one of those exceptional beings in whom there was an almost innate criminal propensity, and whose infamous practices were in themselves as great a source of pleasure and satisfaction as the booty derived from them.

Mrs. Thompson, his companion in the later period of his life, has declared that he committed lawless acts for the love of adventure.

Not long ago a distinguished German psychologist said that his studies led him to regard the impulses of criminal nature in the light of natural laws.

He said that an "anthropological change," or, in other words, a defective organisation of the brain, lies at the foundation of the criminal propensity of habitual thieves, murderers, etc.; that the cerebral changes were of so gross and palpable a nature as to admit of easy demonstration in the post-mortem room, and that they might even be recognised during life by a careful examination of the criminal's head.

Whether the conformation of Peace's cranium or brain was different from that of most people we will not venture to say; but, judging from his photographs, a man like Professor Benedikt, of Vienna, might certainly find some further data for his doctrines by an examination of Peace's head.

Be this as it may, we have no doubt the cerebral organisation of such a hardened and determined fellow as Peace must have been very different from that of ordinary individuals, although we do not for a moment believe that the difference was of so gross and palpable a nature as to be detectable after death, much less before it.

None the less true, however, is the materialistic view of the criminal propensity—a view which, unfortunately, precludes all hope of our ever permanently ridding society of such characters.

As long as human nature is as it is, we shall have amongst us thieves, murderers, forgers, et hoc genus omne.

No amount of education, no penal codes, no force of example, no religious or moral suasion will deter such men from their evil courses, or induce them to lead an honest life.

Indeed, the very propensity which seems to be "born and bred" in their flesh is fanned and encouraged by the morbid interest and sympathy of society, which considers itself outraged by their acts.

When well-dressed ladies contend for the opportunity of looking at these villains through their opera-glasses, and "special correspondents" are "told off" to watch and record every change in the features of the criminal, and every word or whisper that escapes his lips, can we wonder that such men may even feel as much pleasure and pride in being infamous as their more discreet neighbours do in being honest?

Bandy-legged Bill kept his appointment, and on the following evening he drove up to Peace's door at about twenty minutes to eleven.

Peace in the meanwhile had been reconnoitring in the course of that day, in the immediate vicinity of the residence upon which he was to perform.

From what he could gather in the neighbourhood he was led to the conclusion that there was a considerable amount of property in the house. The mistress and children were said to be away on a visit to a relative. The master, who was a rich city merchant, was at home.

All these facts he had wormed out of the idlers and gossips about the place.

Before the gipsy made his appearance Peace had stained his face, and otherwise disguised himself; his implements were brought forth from their hiding place; these were in a small box, which is thus described by Mrs. Thompson:

"He always had with him a red box This he generally had left at the nearest station to the house he was about to operate on, with a notice outside that it was to be called for.

"His tools consisted of a jemmy about fourteen inches long, having a screw at one end and a chisel at the other, which could be used as a plane also. He also carried a block of wood, which he required when using the jemmy, and a knife like a pork butcher's, which he used in cutting through panelling.

"The screw end of the jemmy was for use when the chisel end could not get a purchase in a door.

"He seldom carried lock-picks, having a wonderful facility in making use of a piece of wire, with which he has been known to open locks of the most intricate nature.

"One great cause of his success," says the woman Thompson, "was the fact that he wore small 'fours' ladies' boots without nails; and the police, when they were put on his track, always thought the crime had been committed by a boy, judging from the footsteps."

"Here I be, old man!" cried the gipsy, as Peace presented himself at the door. "Are you ready?"

Peace handed the red box to his companion, then went back into his room again, and returned with a bag and his dog Gip, both of which were placed in the cart.

In another moment the vehicle was rattling over the stones with its two occupants.

"What have you brought the dog for?" inquired Will.

"He may be of service; if we have to leave the trap I'll warrant me that he won't let anybody overhaul its contents."

"All right, guv'nor, you know best," cried the gipsy. "So on we goes, and may we be successful, and have good luck, which is what, I know, we both deserve. Eh, old man?"

"Oh, we both deserve it," answered Peace. "But people never get their deserts in this world; they either get ten times what they ought to have, or none at all. However, it isn't of much use complaining."

The vehicle went rapidly over the stones till the macadamised road was reached, and in due course of time the travellers came within sight of the palatial dwelling which had lured them to the spot.

"Now," said the gipsy, "where had I better wait with the trap?"

"There is a narrow lane runs by yonder house, wait there. If a bobby says anything to you, tell him you've lost your way, and are uncertain which road to take. But, lor', it's so far removed from the high road, and is, moreover, so dark, that you will not be seen."

Peace alighted with his implements and bag, and crept through the shrubbery in front of the house.

The gipsy drove slowly on to the dark lane. No other persons besides their two selves were to be seen. Peace passed through the grounds unobserved by anyone. He then took a survey of the residence he was about to perform on. No lights were visible at any of the windows, and to all appearance the inmates of the house had long since retired to rest.

Peace had been informed in the early portion of the day that the owner and his domestics were early people; he therefore concluded that the inmates were asleep.

But as he had met with one or two failures he was more than usually cautious on this occasion, so that he might render the possibility of discomfiture still more remote.

We have on a former occasion made reference to the long screw he occasionally employed in his predatory excursions; these were most ingeniously constructed. At the end of each screw was a sharp point, and the worm was so well made that the screw itself could be forced into the wood of a door without even making a hole first with a gimlet or bradawl.

A small screwdriver was the only implement required to drive home the screws.

They, however, worked much more freely or easily when a small hole was bored.

Peace was furnished with these on the night in question, and to cut off the retreat of the inmates, should any of them be aroused, and to baffle the police, should they endeavour to enter the premises without his permission, he thought it just as well to secure the front door.

He therefore at once proceeded to insert two of his patent screws—one near the top, and the other near the base of the door. This done, he went to the back of the house. Here he saw two doors, one of which opened on to the lawn.

He secured both of these in the same way. When this had been done, he climbed a spout and got on the balcony, which ran in front of one of the back windows. He then proceeded to effect an entrance as speedily and noiselessly as possible.

He had but little difficulty in doing this, for the window had been left unfastened, owing to the carelessness of one of the maid-servants, who had shot back the clasp presumably in a hurry, for it did not overlap the opposing window sufficiently to prevent its being drawn either up or down.

The shutters, however, were fastened, but very insecurely; Peace had, therefore, but little difficulty in throwing them back.

All this had not occupied the space of more than three or four minutes, and the movements of the burglar had not been seen by anyone, either from within or without.

Peace dropped gently on to the floor of the apartment, which was covered with a thick Turkey carpet. He had on at this time a pair of women's boots, and his footsteps were almost as soft and noiseless as those of a cat.

The room in which he found himself was furnished in the best possible manner, but there were not many articles therein which were sufficiently portable to be transferred to the burglar's bag, and Peace did not, therefore, waste much time in examining its contents.

He ignited one of his silent matches, and took a cursory but rapid review of its most noticeable features.

Before leaving it, however, he drew back the shutters and opened the bottom window sufficiently wide to admit of his passing through in case of any surprise or alarm. He crept downstairs and entered the front parlour. In this there were several articles of value, which he at once deposited safely in his bag.

He then proceeded towards the back parlour. This was fitted up as a library. To all appearance the owner of the habitation made use of it for business purposes, for on a library table there were spread out vast heaps of papers, tied up in bundles, with letters, ledger account books, and other objects usually found in a merchant's counting-house or a lawyer's office.

In a recess at one corner of the room was a large iron safe; this at once attracted the burglar's attention. Closing the door of the room softly Peace drew from his pocket a curled waxed taper, the end of which he ignited with one of his matches.

He then made a careful examination of the safe, which, he felt assured, contained property—possibly notes and gold were encased therein. Drawing forth his bent wire, he endeavoured therewith to pick the lock.

He twisted and turned the wire in every possible direction, but was not successful in opening the safe. But he was not a man, as we have already seen, to give up a thing easily.

He had set his heart upon ransacking the safe, and to leave the house without effecting this object was the very last idea that would enter his mind.

He persevered with most laudable ambition, but the lock was too much for him—it was of peculiar construction.

He tried his skeleton keys, with no better result. He sat down in one of the library chairs, the very image of despair; he never remembered to have been so baffled.

He had another turn at the door of the safe, which was as immovable as the Rock of Gibraltar—a place, by the way, he was afterwards destined to become acquainted with.

He now made an attempt to force open the door with his jemmy and the piece of wood he carried with him, but it resisted all his efforts, and he at last began to despair.

A sudden thought struck him—the key of the safe was doubtless somewhere in the house. Probably the owner of it had it in his pocket. Peace crept upstairs again. Not a soul was to be seen. No one was in either the back or front room first floor. He went up cautiously to the next storey. In the front room of this he heard someone snoring.

He concluded that this was the master of the house. He opened the door about an inch, and peered in—a man with a dark beard and a moustache was in bed. He was evidently sleeping soundly. On a chair by the side of the bed were several garments. There was just sufficient light for the burglar to discern these.

He felt the time had come for him to make an effort. Grasping his revolver in his right hand, he crept on all-fours to the side of the bed, watching as he did so the face of the sleeping man with the eyes of a lynx.

He placed his hand on a pair of black trousers, and felt something heavy in one of the pockets. Gathering them together in a heap, he crept back towards the door, which he passed through in safety. When on the landing he rifled the pockets, in one of which was a large bunch of keys.

He slid downstairs and gained the back parlour, or library, as it was usually termed by the household.

Once more he ignited his wax taper, and breathed more freely.

To his infinite delight, one of the keys fitted the lock, which was turned back; then the massive doors of the safe were thrown open.

Peace looked curiously at its contents. One shelf contained a mass of documents, some books, and other articles which were of no value to the burglar. But on one of the other shelves there was a cash-box and two canvas bags.

"All right," murmured Peace; "this is worth fighting for. My word! but it is lucky I thought of the keys being in the house!"

The bags were at once placed in the one he had brought with him, the cash-box was opened with a small key he had found on the bunch abstracted from the gentleman's pocket.

Between fifty and sixty sovereigns were in the cash-box, together with a roll of notes. It is needless to observe that these found their way into Peace's pocket.

A gold cup, a silver salver, and a box containing jewels were also in the safe. These were placed in the burglar's bag to keep company with the other valuables.

Peace had been fortunate enough to have a good haul, and, having been so far successful, he thought it best to get clear off with his booty while the coast was clear.

He at once made for the back-room first-floor. From the balcony of this he let his bag gently down on to the grass plot beneath with a small piece of cord; then he climbed over the balcony, and, hanging for a moment by his hands, he dropped from thence on to the grass.

Unfortunately for him, his coat-tail swept down one of the shrubs in a flower-pot on to a glass skylight over the back kitchen.

The crash of glass awoke one of the maidservants, who jumped out of bed, and, opening one of the back windows, peered forth.

She saw a man running across the grass plot towards the shrubbery by the side of the house, and at once suspected that something was amiss. Panting and almost breathless, Peace arrived at the spot where Bandy-legged Bill was awaiting his appearance. He jumped into the cart, and told his companion to drive off at once.

Bill urged on his pony to its fullest speed, and in a very short time he and his companion were far away from the scene of the burglary. In a short time they reached Leather Lane in safety, without the faintest degree of suspicion being attached to them.

The burglary at Denmark Hill was pronounced to be a great success both by the principal and his abettor.

Peace presented his companion with fifty pounds as a recompense for his valuable services. It was a great deal more than the gipsy had ever expected, and he expressed himself more than satisfied—indeed, he was modest enough to intimate that it was more than he deserved.

Meanwhile, the inmates of the house at Denmark Hill were aroused from their slumbers by the screaming of the servant-girl, who had seen the burglar make a precipitate retreat over the lawn in the rear of her master's house.

Her fellow-servants jumped out of their beds, huddled on their things, and hastened at once to see what was the matter. The owner of the establishment looked in vain for his trousers, which our hero had so cleverly possessed himself of. The gentleman sought for another pair, but his wardrobe as well as the drawers in his room were locked, and his bunch of keys was not at hand.

Wrapping himself in his long dressing-gown and drawers and putting his feet into his slippers, he sallied forth.

The open safe, the black trousers on one of the chairs of the library, together with the missing property, clearly demonstrated that a burglar had been in the premises.

A search was at once instituted for the robber, but without any satisfactory result. The merchant was furious. He ordered one of his men-servants to hasten at once to the station and give notice to the police. But here a difficulty presented itself. The front door could not be opened. Peace had firmly secured it with his screws. The whole party rushed to the back entrance, which was equally well secured. Everybody was astonished, as well they might be. It seemed like sorcery.

One of the men-servants unfastened the shutters of the front parlour, and threw open the window, and by this means succeeded in leaving the premises.

In about a quarter of an hour he returned with three police officers. The usual formula had to be gone through. A list of the missing articles, as far as these could be ascertained, was made by the inspector, who declared the robbery had been committed by a practised hand.

He was perfectly right; but this was but poor consolation to the owner of the property. He asked the girl if she could identify the burglar. She answered in the negative.

She had only seen his back. His face she never caught sight of, and even assuming she had, identification would have been almost impossible.

There was not even a remote chance of discovering the depredator, and Peace was perfectly well assured of this.

The booty he had obtained by his burglary was considerably over two hundred pounds, after deducting the fifty he had given to Bandy-legged Bill, and as he had received a letter from his mother urging him in the strongest terms to return to Sheffield, he determined upon quitting the metropolis and taking up his quarters in his native town.

In a few days after our hero's sucessful expedition to Denmark Hill, he packed up his things, had them conveyed to the station by his friend Bill, and after calling upon Laura Stanbridge and bidding her farewell, he started off to Sheffield.

He gave the gipsy a pressing invitation to pay a visit to him soon after his return.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

We have now to describe another phase in the history of the boy Alf Purvis. Since the departure of the old lady, Mrs. Grover, his mistress had been more than usually kind to him, making something like a companion of him during the hours of relaxation.

One evening she said to him, "Alf, I want you to go with me to the east end of the town. I purpose taking you to a place which I think will be interesting to you."

"Thank you, marm, When am I to go?"

"At once—therefore get ready without delay."

Alf did as he was bid, wondering all the while what was up, but he said nothing, wisely keeping his thoughts to himself.

When ready, his mistress led him to the door. There was a cab waiting outside, but Alf remarked that the horse was a fine animal, and well groomed, and that the driver wore no badge upon his coat.

"Now, then, jump in," cried his mistress. He obeyed, and was followed by Miss Stanbridge.

The driver of the vehicle, without waiting for the usual instructions as to where he was to drive to, set off at a brisk pace towards Trafalgar Square.

The cab rattled along down the Strand, which was full of noise and light, and through the ponderous arch of Temple Bar into the City, grave, dark, and silent as it is by night alone.

In a short time the vehicle passed along Leadenhall Street, Aldgate, lighted only by the street lamps, and here and there by a faint gleam from a window of some cigar shop or tavern; then they entered a street so broad, so bustling, that one would have fancied oneself in one of the great thoroughfares of the West End, were it not for the small size of the houses and the squalid appearance of the inhabitants.

They had passed the boundary between wealth and poverty, between vice and crime. They were now in a new world, among a race of men who were governed by different customs, by different fashions, by different codes of morality from those of civilised London. They had crossed the frontier of Aldgate pump, and had reached the land of costermongers and thieves. They were in Whitechapel. It is strange what distinctive features different parts of London have.

There is a mixed population in every district, more or less, and there are unfortunately dishonest people in every quarter of this great metropolis; but the unrighteous congregate thickly in many districts which appear to be the homes of the lawless.

At one time Westminster had an unenviable reputation, at another time Whitefriars, which was known by the name of Alsatia. St. Giles's, and the Dials, and many other parts of London have still an unwholesome odour.

An interesting book might be written by detectives, who are for ever engaged in searching for thieves in their well-known resorts. It was Saturday night when the boy and his mistress arrived at Whitechapel, and the street they were in, which was as broad as Piccadilly, presented an extraordinary appearance. Butchers' stalls extended down to a considerable distance; the pavements were lined with retailers of fried fish and potatoes, of fruit and vegetables, and a thousand miscellaneous wares, which were displayed to view by means of stout brown paper candles, which, prepared in a peculiar manner, afforded an excellent light.

In some cases the vendors of wares made use of naphtha lamps in lieu of the candles. Alf Purvis was watching this scene from the window of the cab with great delight, for he was familiar with the neighbourhood, which reminded him of the poor bird-catcher who had brought him up to London.

"You know this part of London, don't you?" inquired Laura Stanbridge.

"Yes, marm, very well. Whitechapel was the first place I came to after leaving the farmer."

"Ah! so I think you told me."

The cab now suddenly wheeled to the right, and went through a labyrinth of dark and wretched streets, in which nothing could be seen except a few shops full of rags and bones, and placards offering a farthing a pound for the bones, and a penny for the rags.

The cab stopped at the corner, and the driver came round and opened the door.

"Will you get out here," said he, addressing himself to the young lady, "or shall I drive farther on?"

"I think this will be near enough for my purpose," she answered. "We are close to Little Mint Street?"

"Yes, quite close."

"Good, then, we'll alight." And, springing out, the lady walked down the street with the assurance of one who was well acquainted with the locality.

Alf followed his mistress. He did not know what was about to happen, but had some misgivings.

For the locality he had no predilection, for his early experience of it had taught him that it was a place to be avoided; but, situated as he was, he had no other alternative left than to merely submit to the dictates of his patroness.

After a few minutes he heard a whistle and the rumbling of a train. He started, and said:

"There's some railway here, I s'pose?"

"Yes," returned his companion; "the Blackwall. We shall get under it presently."

By the light of a lamp he saw a smile pass over her features. A strange feeling of doubt and mistrust took possession of him.

"Why was he brought hither? It seemed most singular."

They were soon beneath the arch of the railway, when, instead of passing through it, Miss Stanbridge turned and pointed to the right.

Alf shuddered. They were standing at the mouth of a narrow street, as black and repulsive as a cavern.

It ran under the railway for some distance, the archway being propped up by iron posts.

Thus this street was always dark—it was a tomb; its inhabitants were buried alive, the only sun was the hot blaze of the engines which passed over their heads.

"What a queer street for people to live in!" exclaimed Alf. "I didn't know there was such a street."

"Didn't you? Well, we live and learn. The people are as queer as the habitations," returned his mistress, with a merry laugh.

Alf thought there was not much to laugh at. In fact, he was more disposed to feel dispirited and depressed.

This was not to be wondered at, for the locality was a perfect den of iniquity. The street was inhabited chiefly by women, who were the most abandoned and criminal of their sex; they were foul, abusive creatures, and here they lived—a republic of demons.

The boy felt intuitively that he was in the unwholesome atmosphere which was breathed by the very worst of the human species.

"I don't like the place," cried Alf.

If he had been disgusted with the place upon first making its acquaintance, he was still more so as he proceeded along.

At the sound of strange steps lights gleamed on all sides, and women emerged from every door. Many of them were only partially clothed, and the appearance they presented was perfectly loathsome. Their faces were swollen with drink, and the expression of their features was simply disgusting. They surrounded Alf like a set of harpies, and he became positively frightened.

Laura Stanbridge, however, came to his rescue. She spoke to them in an authoritative tone, which could not be misunderstood by them, albeit the language she made use of was not comprehended by the boy.

Her words, however, seemed to have the desired effect, for the wretched, besotted creatures parted on one side, and let the two passengers pass without any attempt at further molestation.

Alf Purvis was delighted when they came to a small lane branching out of the street under the railway. This was as dark as Erebus.

There were no lights and no houses, only a dead wall on each side.

"Well, this beats all," cried the boy. "This is a place."

"Yes," murmured his mistress. "We must be careful how we proceed along."

She produced a bull's-eye lantern from her pocket, and made the light therefrom precede her as she walked.

"Isn't there danger?" inquired her companion.

"None in the least."

"Oh, I'm glad to hear that."

The lane ended in a yard and in a tall, dingy house, which appeared as if it had been uninhabited for years.

Taking a stone from the ground, Laura Stanbridge knocked several times against the door, and then, pausing for a moment, gave a single rap.

"Are we to go in here, then?" inquired the boy.

"Yes, certainly. This is our destination."

The door swung open, and they entered.

But they had not yet gained the unhallowed precincts of the mysterious habitation.

Alf was watching the movements of his mistress with evident anxiety.

Another door was before them with a glass window above it.

Miss Stanbridge wetted her finger and rubbed it across the window in such a way as to elicit a loud screeching noise.

The effect of this was magical.

A face appeared at the window, which was protected by huge iron bars.

"Who's there, and what's your business?" said a voice.

"A lady and a lad on the fly," returned Miss Stanbridge.

"It's the voice of the duchess," said the voice above.

"Yes, it's the duchess," answered Laura. "All right."

The door was opened, and they went down some steps into a large room.

Alf's eyes wandered over this with all the curiosity of a lad who finds himself in a scene which is new and strange to him.

THEY WENT DOWNSTAIRS INTO A LARGE ROOM.

His companion, however, seemed perfectly at her ease, and the most noticeable features of the apartment were quite familiar to her.

There were two long tables from fireplace to fireplace, running parallel with each other.

They were laid with greasy napkins, iron plates, chipped tea cups filled with salt, two small stone jars filled with mustard, and knives and forks chained to the table.

A number of candles in the shades nailed to the wall, lighted the room. These being never snuffed were appropriately invested with thieves, which streamed in large flakes upon the floor, the seats, and the backs of the guests.

In this place professional thieves and ruffians of every description were accustomed to congregate, and here numberless robberies were concocted. It was the resort of lawless men, who waged ceaseless war against society.

Here they were accustomed to boast of their exploits as if robbery was a thing to be proud of. The place was a foul den, a very plague-spot—which, however, it seemed out of the power of anybody to remove.

The police knew perfectly well that it was the resort of thieves, but for some reason or another it seemed to be beyond the reach of the law. There are hundreds of similar places in London.

One fireplace was black and empty, but the other blazed with an enormous fire—the temple of a blear-eyed, salamander-like old woman, upon whom were fixed, in one long look of hunger and anxiety, the eyes of a vast assemblage of men and women who were seated at two tables, clad in disguises at once loathsome and appalling.

"He's not a bad sort," said a black-bearded man to Miss Stanbridge, "him as keeps this 'ere establishment—he'll do a bloke a good turn at times."

"Yes, so I've heard," she answered.

The man went on:

"He's one of your rough and ready customers, but he's none of your smile-in-the-face-and-cut-your-throat blokes, for all his ugly mug and swivel eye."

"Where is he?" inquired Alf, who began to be interested.

"Ain't here at present, young shaver," answered the man; "leastways, I don't see him anywhere in the room."

"And who are those persons?" inquired the boy, nodding towards the group at the table.

"Those? Oh, they are cadgers," answered the man, with something like contempt in his tone; "only cadgers."

The waitress of this delectable establishment, "Limpy Meg," as she was usually termed, now came towards them, flourishing in her hand a brown napkin.

"Well, Meg, still as nimble on your pins as ever?" cried the dark-bearded man. "What's the news, lass? All quiet? Any 'crushers' been here?"

"No, never a one," answered Meg; "all quiet, plenty of business, and no inquiries—that's the way to say it," she added, with another flourish of the napkin.

In a few minutes after this a yell was raised, the tables were covered with joints and vegetables served up on iron dishes. It was not long before they were all served, and it was a strange sound to hear the noisy clattering of knives and forks upon the iron dishes, and the tinkling of the chains.

Laura and her protégé watched all these proceedings, none of the dinner party taking the slightest notice of them—indeed, they did not appear to be conscious of their presence, albeit, the boy's companion was known to the majority, if not to all, of them.

She passed through a large apartment and went upstairs to a room on the first storey, which was small and almost filled with ragged men and women.

In this room was the dark-bearded man whom Alf had conversed with below.

"What are they doing, sir?" inquired the boy.

"Making a cadger," returned the man, who then whispered to a short, thick-set fellow next to him, who whispered to somebody else; and Alf heard them saying as they glanced at his mistress:

"That's Laura Stanbridge, the most famous she-fence in London, and she cuts it fat at the West End of the town."

Then the men nodded mysteriously to one another.

Laura, however, did not seem to hear what they said. If she did, she deemed it prudent to keep silent.

The most noticeable person in the room was a thin-featured man, with a bushy beard, seated at a small table; low cunning was depicted on his ferret-like features. In front of him, on the table at which he was writing, was a bundle of papers; by the side of the man was a pale boy in rags.

Alf looked inquiringly at his mistress, who informed him in a low whisper that the man with the grey beard was known as the Smoucher. He was a writer of begging-letter petitions, and was employed in fabricating all sorts of documents for the brotherhood who frequented the establishment.

The den of mystery to which Laura Stanbridge had paid a visit contained ruffians of every conceivable description.

Lolling in an arm-chair behind the table, with a huge chunk of bread and meat in one hand and a glass of gin and water in the other, and a short black pipe in his mouth, was a burly ruffian, with strength written in his brawny arms and broad shoulders and prominent, heaving chest, with villainy in his deep, hollow eyes and his cropped black whiskers and eyebrows, which were half an inch apart.

This was the cracksman, a famous burglar, and a pal of the Smoucher in all the lays which the latter devised and the former accomplished.

"Now, young man," said the Smoucher, looking up from his papers, "you said you could read, I think?"

"Yes, a little, sir. I've been to school."

"All right, so much the better; nothing like education. Your friends say you are to try your luck at cadging in the country, where people's green and food's cheap. Take this paper and chalk up on the post of every door you go to one of these marks, according to the character of the people you meet with there; that will act as a clue to any brother cadger who may chance to come after you as to what treatment they are likely to expect."

The paper contained a series of marks or signs, which are known only to cadgers.

The boy took the paper and thrust it into his pocket.

The man at the table then gave him several recipes for disfiguring his body so as to present the appearance of burns or scalds, together with other accidents, all of which he laid down to his young pupil in a most systematic, businesslike manner.

Alf Purvis was astonished at these mysterious proceedings, but he remained silent.

A man now came up to the table, and said to the Smoucher:

"What do you charge for a petition?"

"Eighteenpence," was the answer.

"Well, then, let's have one."

The Smoucher placed two ink-bottles before him—they were filled with ink of two different shades. He then spread a bit of paper under his hand and began writing.

"He's a stunner at using the pen," said one, looking on. "I wish I knew how to do it."

"You'd soon find yourself in the 'steel' if you did, old man!" cried one of the party.

The Smoucher, having finished the document upon which he was engaged, folded up the same, creased the paper as if it had been long written, and after examining the signatures attached thereto of ministers and churchwardens, he dipped his fingers under the fireplace, and smeared it with ashes, to the infinite delight of the lookers-on, who swore that there wasn't one in twenty who wouldn't take it for a real concern.

A little business was transacted, and the cracksman, Laura, and the boy were left alone with the Smoucher.

"Well, Laura," said the latter, in a pleased tone, "who would have thought of seeing you here, and you've brought a stranger with you?" he added, glancing at Alf Purvis. "He looks too genteel for this place."

"He's sharp, and willing to learn."

"Ah, I see; you want him taught—wish to have him put in training, eh?"

Laura Stanbridge nodded.

"Well, if you mean business, he must be brought regularly up to the trade—or profession, more properly speaking."

"Certainly; that is right enough."

"And who do you think of binding him to?"

"That's just the question I was going to ask you."

"Me? I don't know what answer to make."

The Smoucher leant his head on his hand, and began to ruminate.

"There's a gentleman we both on us know," said the cracksman, "an' both on us respect. His name is Matthew Furness. He began life as a half shallow in the street; from a shiverer he became a cadger; from a cadger he became duffer (pedlar); from a duffer he became an area sneak, a shop bouncer, and a fogle-tugger. From a fogle-tugger he became a swell mobbite, and then a rampsman, and then a cracksman. He has ascended from the very foot to the very summit of his honourable and scientific profession. And beside that, he is up to all the other little games of life that are worth knowing.

"There's no doubt Matt's a great man—a very great man," said the cracksman meditatively.

"And who so well adapted to take my young gentleman in hand?" cried Miss Stanbridge.

The Smoucher had not vouchsafed any reply to the adulatory harangue.

"The only question is, will he do so?" said Laura.

"I'll do my best," returned the man of many letters.

"You'll do nothing of the sort. Not if I know it!" cried a voice from the farther end of the room.

The speaker was the landlord of the establishment. He had short, black, crisp hair, a swivel eye, and his features were certainly not handsome.

"Well, I am blest! This beats cockfighting!" cried the burglar. "What business is it of yourn, Sam?"

"I'll make it my business," returned the landlord. "It shan't be done, I tell ye. I won't have anything of the sort take place in my house. We all know what we are, but that's no reason a younker like that, who in all likelihood is gently bred and born, should be ruined for life."

"There's an end of the matter, Sam," said the Smoucher; "I, for one, won't have any hand in the business."

The tables were suddenly turned. The landlord's word was law; he held the life and liberty of his customers in his hand, and if he chose to round on them it would go hard with all.

Miss Stanbridge was unprepared for this issue. She took the boy by the hand and led him out of the room.

"I hope you'll have a better office when you come here again!" cried the landlord as she descended the stairs.

She made no reply, but went into the room below.

While all this had been taking place a woman had been stationed outside the den of iniquity, clinging to the iron railings which ran round the front of the habitation; her eyes were directed towards the windows which shone so brightly.

She watched intently, but could not see the groups of persons in the large room, but she heard the confused sounds as of many voices.

The woman heard a voice. In her eyes shone a strange and lurid light. She moaned upon the pavement, and tore her grey hairs while the tears poured down her cheeks.

"He is there with the pestiferous, odious crew of wretches," exclaimed the woman. "He is there—I hear his voice. Ah, why do I love this boy? What secret and unknown power is it that draws me like a loadstone to this accursed spot? I cannot help it. Why do I take an interest in this poor lad? He is naught to me, and I dare not see him again. I am in her power, and she has neither pity nor remorse."

The woman arose, pressed her hands to her temples, and shuddered.

Taking one last lingering glance at the thieves' haunt, she turned and hastily left the spot.

Laura Stanbridge and Alf passed through the den, and walked on till they came within sight of the cab which was waiting for them. They entered the vehicle in question, and were driven rapidly home.

(To be continued.)

"It is unfortunate," he added, "but I never thought for a moment of her property till the funeral was over. And now it is too late to do anything." Still it is curious to note that Albert Pel seemed the richer after his mother's demise. One Hubert remarked on this, and when he was told by Albert that the old lady had accidentally killed herself by meddling with his electric apparatus he was uncharitable enough to be suspicious and to refuse to have anything to do with young Pel in the future. Albert fully recognised this change of attitude and looked on Hubert as a dangerous enemy and one to be removed if ever chance gave him the opportunity.

In 1872 Pel's father died and left his son 25,000 francs. Now that he was a man of property Albert gave up the watchmaker's shop and devoted his time entirely to his beloved poisons. Something in the symptoms of Madame Pel interested him, and he saw that his specific would require concentration if it was to do its work properly. The murderer's mother had taken too long to die. For the purpose of study Pel took handsome apartments, and announced that he was a doctor of Sorbonne, an organist at Trinity Church, and a professor of rhetoric at one of the Paris colleges. Those who knew him only laughed at his lies, but those who did not know the little peculiarities of the learned liar were inclined to think that the ex-watchmaker was a very important personage indeed.

To magnify his importance, Pel bestowed upon himself a number of decorations and orders, together with two or three medals for saving life, and when he used to appear in full dress he glittered like a jeweller's window. His next statement was that he had invented a new sort of gun, which was being tried by the French Government at Cherbourg, and that he had been wounded in the course of the trials. For thus bleeding in the service of his country he had been awarded a handsome pension. Some of his admirers believed this wonderful yarn, or professed to do so, and Pel entertained the faithful right royally.

Twenty-five thousand francs does not last long in Paris, if one takes to entertaining, and soon Albert found that his coffers were nearly empty. However, he thought that the shopkeepers could well give long credit to the man who was to receive a fortune from the nation for his wonderful cannon, and he ran up bills in every direction. At last the tradesmen would wait no longer, and one fine morning his lodgings were raided, and all his effects sold. This upset the "doctor," and he took to such extraordinary antics that he was seized and confined for five weeks as a lunatic. At the end of that time he was discharged as perfectly sane, and immediately gathered together the crumbs of his fortune and started a theatrical syndicate, called the "Délassements Comiques," of which he was appointed manager.

Now Pel was a saturnine sort of person, without a grain of humour in his whole composition, and therefore it is scarcely to be wondered at that the venture was an utter failure, and that the last shreds of his inheritance were lost.

Then our hero bethought him of his poisons again, and retired from public life. In 1877 he took an isolated pavilion at the bottom of a garden in Ternes, one of the suburbs of Paris, and there he established himself as a medical electrician. Besides himself only his servant, Marie Mahoin, lived in the bungalow. At least that was all the public knew of. Certainly at times a veiled lady had been seen to go into the place and to come out again later, but she was put down as a chance visitor.

With the veiled lady of Ternes we have now to do. She was Eugénie Meyer, an elderly, ugly spinster. Pel had met her in answer to a matrimonial advertisement, and had promised to marry her. Certain formalities had to be completed, and then he would make her Mrs. Pel; in the meantime she was his mistress. She really lived in the pavilion, but only went out heavily veiled in the evening. Hers was the money which kept up the establishment.

MADAME BELLEISLE LEAVES THE HOUSE.

Pel had lived in Ternes for a little over a month when Marie Mahoin was taken seriously ill. She suffered from vomiting, diarrhœa, colic, and intense thirst. Next day Eugénie Meyer was similarly attacked. Pel declared that he knew what was the matter with them and would soon cure them. There was no need for a doctor. But Marie Mahoin noticed that after everything that Pel gave her she suffered more violently, and she became suspicious and demanded that a proper medical man should be called in. Pel was annoyed, and, after much persuasion, called a negro doctor, who was practising in the neighbourhood. Disgusted with him, Marie insisted on having her own doctor, and the latter took her off to the nearest hospital, where she soon recovered.

But what of Eugénie, who remained with the silent Pel? On her recovery Marie Mahoin called at the pavilion, and asked to see Eugénie. Pel refused to admit her, but gave her her boxes and sent her away. Then the medical electrician shut himself up in the pavilion for several days, and would not open the door even to receive his letters. At the end of that time he emerged from his retreat alone. He had taken the house on a two years' lease; this he now cancelled and paid up for six months. The concierge examined the premises, and saw that the walls and carpets were stained with blood. She pointed this out to Pel, who said that his nose had bled very violently a day or so previously, and he

had been unable to find a basin in time. On the dung-heap outside a bloodstained cloth was found. Then Pel left for good, and nothing more was heard of Eugénie Meyer.

Delighted with the operation of his poison and with the ease with which he could get possession of money by its use, Pel decided to secure another victim. In 1880 he returned to Paris and opened another watchmaker's shop in the Rue Kléber. On August 26 of that year he married a grisette, named Eugénie Buffereau. Her dowry was 1,800 francs, quite a small sum, but, as Pel thought, better than nothing. It would never do to let her spend it all, so Pel at once commenced experimenting on her, and in a couple of months she was dead. Her symptoms were precisely the same as those of Marie Mahoin and Eugénie Meyer—vomiting, purging, colic, and thirst. A doctor was called in for appearance sake, and he diagnosed the case as one of gastro-enteritis. When Pel married Hubert seems to have lost his dislike for him, for we find that he was present on one occasion when Madame Pel was writhing in a chair, and suggested that a doctor should be summoned at once. Pel refused to do so, saying that he knew what was the matter, and that his wife had seen one man, who did her no good.

Again Albert Pel refused to allow anybody to touch the remains of the dead, save himself, and his touching was limited to two occasions only, namely, when he placed the corpse in the coffin and when he cut off a lock of his victim's hair. Before his career closed Pel had quite a nice little collection of souvenirs of his deceased subjects for experiments.

Once the funeral was over, Pel set to work to dissipate the dowry which his ill-fated wife had brought to him, and was greatly annoyed when the relations of the murdered girl wanted him to give an account of her property. So angry did he get that he wrote an abusive letter to one of his brothers-in-law, telling him that he thought him an unutterable blackguard, and refused to tell him anything about his dead wife's fortune.

A solitary life seemed impossible to Pel, and nine months after he had killed Eugénie Buffereau he married a second time, his wife being a Mdlle. Murat-Belleisle, who had previously been apprenticed to the watchmaker. She had no property of her own, but her mother was wealthy, and all her fortune was to go to her daughter when she died. This ensured an opportunity for a double experiment. Madame Murat-Belleisle was invited to live with Pel and his wife, and in a very short time mother and daughter were seized with the familiar symptoms. Pel told them that he was so used to seeing cases of this sort that there would be no real need for a physician to be summoned, and he could treat them himself. He did so, and they grew so alarmingly ill that Madame Murat-Belleisle's suspicions were aroused, and she fled from the house. As it would be useless for him to kill the daughter while the old woman was alive, Pel had to break off in the middle of his experiment, and his wife recovered. Of course Madame Mother-in-law got well as soon as she was away from the house of her loving and disinterested son-in-law.

This failure was rather a disappointment to our saturnine friend, and he vented his rage on his wife, whom he ill-treated most cruelly; so much so that in 1884 she left him and rejoined her mother. To make up for the fortune which he had lost through the suspicions of his mother-in-law, Pel then invited a girl named Eugénie Rabulle to be his mistress. He seems to have had a penchant for the name Eugénie. Perhaps it brought him luck. Miss Rabulle was at first rather taken with the proposal, but at the last moment she cried off, and Pel was left to lament the loss of her dowry of 1,200 francs.

However, he soon consoled himself with a Miss Elise Boehmer. Elise was forty years of age, very ugly, uninteresting and common; but she possessed a certain amount of property which she had scraped together during her uneventful life. Pel thought that he could do very well with the lady's savings, and accordingly took her to a house in the suburb of Montreuil, where he established himself in June, 1884. Early in July Elise began to get tired of her master demanding sums of money from her, and wrote to a friend complaining that she was not happy, and she feared that she was not even safe under Pel's care. On July 9 Elise was taken ill, and three days later Pel shut himself up in his house.

Montreuil is not a particularly sweet-smelling suburb, but when on July 15 the whole atmosphere around Pel's house was filled with a fearful reek, the neighbours got alarmed, and wanted to see what was the matter. They tried to peer into his windows, but the shutters were fastened, and the curtains drawn. Still, there could be no doubt that the smell was proceeding from his premises. At night the house was lit up by great flames, as if a furnace was in full blast within. And still the sickening stench increased. Early on the following morning two women did manage to get a peep into the place, and saw the evil-visaged Pel stooping over a glowing stove, which was red hot, and stoking the fire. All that day the air was heavy with the evil odours, but during the following night the nuisance abated. On the third morning the women again peeped into Pel's room, and saw that the stove was out, but that the grate was filled with a quantity of white ashes. Boehmer's bed had been pulled out from the wall into the middle of the room, the mattresses had been unripped, and were lying on the floor. In place of the previous sickening smell the odour of chloride of lime was distinguishable.

The neighbours took to talking, and soon formulated a theory that Pel had killed Elise Boehmer, and then cremated her body in the stove. When matters got to that pitch, the police were informed, but they were slow in taking steps, and for three months they pottered about making inquiries. At last they were satisfied, and Albert Pel was arrested.

Prior to his case being tried, doctors were instructed to make experiments, and they purchased a stove exactly similar to the one in the watchmaker's room, secured a corpse from an hospital, dismembered it, and burnt it in the stove. It took exactly two days to be entirely consumed and the ashes which resulted were precisely similar to those found in Pel's room.

In the watchmaker's apartments a blood-stained saw, with fragments of fat still sticking to it, was found. Bit by bit the history of Albert Pel was pieced together, and at last a complete case was ready for the jury. That was nearly a year after he had committed his last murder.

The trial was not remarkable save for the fact that the great Dr. Brouardel proved that he had found arsenic in the bodies of Madame Pel, the mother of the accused, and of his first wife. After a hearing that lasted over several days, Albert Pel was found guilty without extenuating circumstances, and was condemned to death.

But even the biggest rogue sometimes has a stroke of good fortune. A few days after his condemnation it was discovered that one of the jurymen who had tried him was an undischarged bankrupt, and that was considered a sufficient reason for the conviction being quashed by the Court of Cassation, and Albert Pel was ordered to be kept in penal servitude for the rest of his life.

A Thin Skull.

A FATAL squabble had taken place at a fair in County Tyrone, and one of the ringleaders was being tried for manslaughter.

For the defence a doctor was called, who declared that the skull of the deceased man had been abnormally thin.

The prisoner, on being asked if he had anything to say in mitigation of sentence, replied:

"No, yer honour; but I must ask this. Was that the kind of a skull for a man to go to a fair wid?"

A Long Word.

AT a general court-martial on an army officer, held at Port Blair, Andaman Islands, about thirty years ago, Private Flannagan, a witness for the prosecution, was being severely cross-examined by the prisoner's counsel, who suddenly made use of a very lengthy word, which completely confused the witness, whose knowledge of such things was limited.

He scratched his head in doubt, and at last, in a tone of the greatest embarrassment, blurted out:

"I'm not a scholard, yer honour, and, be jabers! I'd take it kindly if you'd break that word up a bit smaller for me."

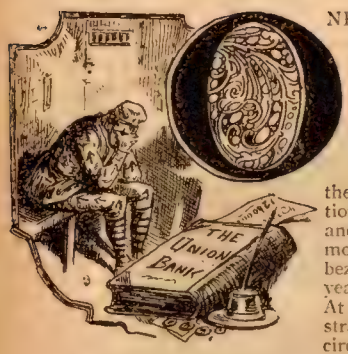
A Den of Thieves.

A FEW years ago a regular thieves' den was discovered in a cave on the Ruinenberg, near Sanssouci, Berlin. The cave was dug in the ground, lined with boards, and covered with turf. Its holding capacity was not great, but there was room for at least five persons, and it was furnished with a table and stools, a cooking-stove, a lamp, and other necessary articles. On a shelf were the remains of food. It is remarkable that it could have remained undiscovered so long, as the spot is much frequented, and has been for years. Previous to the discovery people had often been attacked and robbed in the neighbourhood, and it is now believed that the cave was the hiding-place of these highwaymen.

The Plunderings of *William George Pullinger.*

HOW a trusted Bank Official defrauded his Employers of over a Quarter of a Million of Money, during a period of five years.

"So glistered the dire snake, and into fraud
Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the Tree
Of Prohibition, root of all our woe.'
—MILTON, "Paradise Lost," Book ix.



ONE of the most mysterious cases of fraud that has ever been brought before the public was that of William George Pullinger, the chief cashier of the Union Bank. The mystery did not lie in the manner of his peculations, but in the disappearance of the huge sum of money which he had embezzled during the five years ending April, 1860. At the time of his arrest the strangest stories were in circulation with reference to him, but the strangest of them was not so strange as the fact that this man was able to embezzle upwards of a quarter of a million of money, the property of the Union Bank, his employers. There are several almost parallel cases in the history of frauds, the most recent one being that of Goudie, who stole about £170,000 from the Bank of Liverpool, this huge sum not being missed until Goudie had absconded and a searching examination of the books had taken place. Walter Watts, Robson, Redpath, and others have also stolen large amounts of money, but in each and every case it has been found that the stealings have been spent in gambling, keeping up large and expensive establishments, and other such ways. But in Pullinger's case there was no such method or means apparent, and where the money went is a mystery to this day. Some said that twenty or thirty people were implicated in the frauds. Others, again, that Pullinger might well have carried on his frauds without any assistance at all, or at most with the help of a single person skilled in the unholy mysteries of forgery. It was stated as a matter exceeding the limits of credibility that during the five years over which Pullinger's frauds extended, some person or other in the Bank of England who knew the exact state of the balance held by that corporation in favour of the Union Bank, should not have seen the accounts issued by the directors of the Union Bank to their shareholders. To this the reply was that accounts were so made up that neither the Bank of England nor any person who had not access to the books of the Union Bank could have dissected out the actual balance attributed to the Bank of England from the accounts. Then, again, what did Pullinger do with this enormous sum of money which he had embezzled? We know that after the detection of Robson's and Redpath's frauds the committee of the Stock Exchange very properly issued a notice to their members cautioning them against transacting any speculative business on behalf of clerks employed in mercantile, banking, or other establishments, and as soon as Pullinger was arrested, the committee held a meeting on the matter—of course with the intention of dealing very summarily with any broker who had lent himself to Pullinger as an agent for his frauds—but from a letter which they published at the time, asking for better and fuller information, it was certain that no evidence was laid before them upon which they could act.

These gentlemen entertained the most serious doubts whether the money of the shareholders of the Union Bank had been made away with on the stock and share markets at all. It was asserted, on the other hand, that Pullinger carried on his dealings through outside and third parties, and the name of one person, who died a short time before Pullinger's arrest, was particularly mentioned as having been that of the man who first opened the door of speculation to the fraudulent cashier of the Union Bank. If the money was not lost on the share market, where was it lost? Some said upon the turf; others, that Pullinger was in the habit of gambling for stakes of portentous amount. We merely mention these reports as specimens of the thousand and one stories which were flying about town in connection with the name and dealings of this high-flying rogue. Pullinger never made a clean breast of it, and the truth never was and never will be known. On the whole, the inclination of our opinion is that if the truth were known it would be found, as in the Goudie case, that there was a grand simplicity about the manner in which this man threw away the money which he had embezzled.

Perhaps such men as Robson, Redpath, Pullinger, and Goudie have done and are doing great public service. They were what is called highly respectable confidential servants. Their robberies were not of a mere vulgar objective character. They did not steal with the hand, aided by skeleton keys, a jack-in-the-box, or a "jemmy." Theirs was a more subjective villainy, the work of astute minds, doing wrong on the broadest and boldest scale; they took their time about it, went to their daily work, thoroughly respectable. A villa, a brougham, a handsomely fitted pew, a quiet, refined demeanour, these masked them as they daily did a great deal of good work for the very masters they daily plundered. Respectability, religious profession was, in fact, to these men what crape is to the face of the vulgar burglar. The public never hears of a tithe of the respectable villainy discovered in any one year. The duped, by their own folly, are so often, more or less, in the power of those who dupe them that they dare not prosecute. As matters stand, the outward semblance of respectability would seem to be the most unfavourable symptom about any man who applies for our confidence. The poor rogues are, comparatively speaking, harmless, if not useful members of society. In our dealings with them we are on our guard. The really dangerous person is the man who lives in a quiet house, in a quiet way, apparently within his means, who pays scot and lot with the most admirable punctuality, and who in appearance walks about the world the living incarnation of all the virtues which are attributed to us all after our decease by the venal chisel of the dealer in funeral tablets. Against loud, outspoken religious hypocrisy we are on our guard. Of course we do not wish to say one word, nor to write a sarcasm, even by implication, against those men whose conduct is really guided by the precepts of morality and religion, but the misfortune is that the simulation of either religion or morality is not a very difficult task. The wolf can slip the sheep's clothing on and off with scarcely an effort.

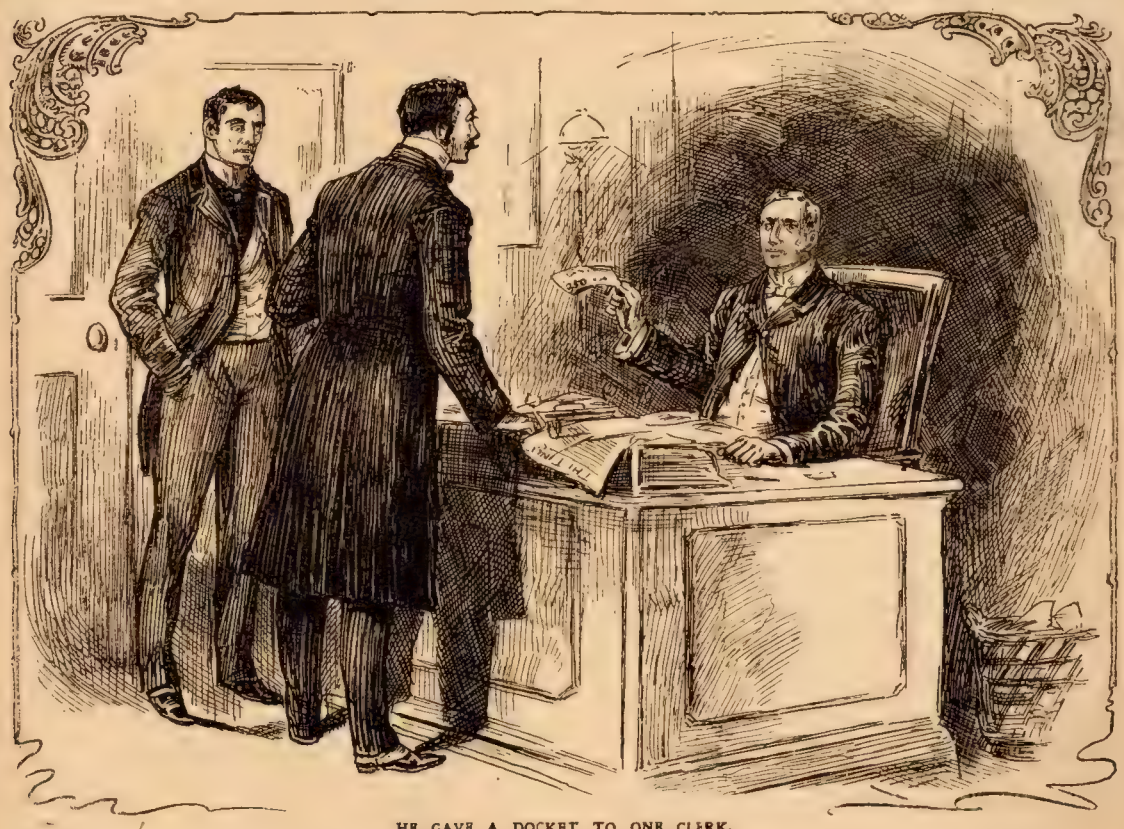
The appalling feature in the whole affair, as in the Liverpool Bank Frauds, seemed to be the slur cast upon the general system under which the Union Bank and other similar establishments were managed. We were told that the directors and manager had taken every precaution which the long experience of commercial men had suggested as necessary to insure absolute safety; but that, in despite of all these precautions, upwards of a quarter of a million of money was filched away from under their very noses. Pullinger, like Goudie, detected one weak point in their defence, just as Redpath had detected another, and as some other great culprits will detect still others before the world is much older. The question arises, How are we to guard against an insidious assault from persons who make no pretensions whatever, except to do their work with punctuality and care? To this question no reply can be given. The only defence which can be offered to the attacks of respectable men is to proceed in all business matters upon the necessary though unlovely principle of not trusting anybody more than can be absolutely helped. And now to our story.

On Friday, April 20, 1860, William George Pullinger was charged at the Mansion House with having, on April 12, stolen the sum of £350, belonging to his employers, the directors of the Union Bank of London, Princes Street. Mr. Lynes appeared for the prosecution, and said that on the date in question one of the bank cashiers, upon making up the balance, found a deficiency of bank notes to the extent of £350. On making inquiry, the prisoner said he knew all about the amount, which was to be carried to the debit of the miscellaneous bills account. He then gave a docket to one clerk for the amount to be so debited, and to another clerk he gave a docket, which was supposed to represent a payment of £350 to the Bank of England on account of the Union Bank. It turned out, however, that no such payment was made, and the prisoner, upon being questioned, on Thursday, April 14, admitted that he had applied the money to his own use.

Some formal evidence having been given, the prisoner, who seemed to be much affected, was remanded for a week. In the meantime, another clerk in the Union Bank had been arrested. His name was Edward John Lyttleton, and he was described as of 2, Woodbine Cottages, Chatham Place, Hackney. He was charged with having stolen the sum of £1,240 belonging to his masters, the chairman and directors of the Union Bank. We may as well dismiss this person at once, as he was afterwards found to have been merely acting, as was his duty, under the instructions of Pullinger.

On May 4, Pullinger was again brought up at the Mansion House, before the Lord Mayor and Sir R. Carden, for re-examination on the charge of having defrauded the Union Bank of various sums, amounting in the aggregate to £263,000.

Mr. Giffard appeared for the prosecution. We may say that Lyttleton was also placed at the bar, but, as we have already intimated, he was acquitted, to use the words of the Lord Mayor, "without the slightest stain clinging to his character."



HE GAVE A DOCKET TO ONE CLERK.

Pullinger was undefended, having refused legal assistance, and asserted his intention to plead "Guilty." The first witness called was William Gomm, a cashier in the Union Bank. He said that on April 12 he balanced the accounts and notes on the bills of the different cashiers at the end of the day, and found a deficiency of £350. He mentioned it to Pullinger, who said he had had the notes out for miscellaneous bills, and he told the witness to pass it through his book, at the same time telling him (witness) the numbering of the notes of which the £350 consisted, and Gomm took them down. There was one note of £200, one of £100, and one of £50. According to the course of business that represented £350 paid for bills of the customers of the bank. The document produced, "Debit miscellaneous bills, £350," was in Pullinger's handwriting. He (the prisoner) showed witness that document at the time.

James Sheldon said: "I am a member of the Stock Exchange, and have offices at 2, Cushion Court, Old Broad Street. On April 12 last the prisoner was indebted to me to the amount of £156 8s., which he paid on that day by £150 in bank notes and £6 8s. in money. The notes I paid into my bankers, Messrs. Masterman, without taking their numbers, but I paid in no other notes on that day."

Robert Johnston deposed: "I am a member of the Stock Exchange; I have offices at 2, Cushion Court, Old Broad Street. I have had dealings with the prisoner, and on April 12 last he was indebted to me, and paid me a Bank of England note for £200. I did not take the number of the note, but paid it into my bankers, Messrs. Olding, Sharpe, and Co."

This was all the evidence given as to Pullinger's Stock Exchange transactions, and was, of course, merely taken for the purpose of proving that Pullinger had actually paid away to his own private debtors and on his own account the actual notes which he had alleged by his books he had paid into the Bank of England to the credit of the Union Bank, on current account of miscellaneous bills.

No questions were asked of either Sheldon or Johnston as to the extent of the prisoner's transactions with them, nor were they questioned as to whether the prisoner's dealings with them had been profitable or otherwise to him. The numbers of the notes in question were as follow: £200 note, No. 82826l; £100 note, No. 58850l; and £50 note, No. 31432.

Henry Collins, clerk to Messrs. Olding, Sharpe and Co., bankers, of Clement's Lane, where Johnston, the last witness, kept an account, and Algernon Henry Careless, clerk at Messrs. Masterman, Peters and Co., bankers, proved respectively the paying in of bank notes by the two members of the Stock Exchange mentioned. These notes, paid by Pullinger to Sheldon and Johnston, and by them into the banks, were the same notes—£200, £100, and £50—which Pullinger was accused of having misappropriated, the numbers of these notes corresponding with those given by the prisoner to the witness Gomm, as making up the £350

John Benjamin Barton deposed; "I am clerk at the Union Bank, and it was formerly part of my duty to act under Pullinger's directions. Under his superintendence, I kept what is called the 'Walks-book,' in which are entered all sums paid by the Union Bank to their credit at the Bank of England, and all sums remitted from the branch banks

to the credit of the bank. On April 12 I received the docket produced from the prisoner; it is in his handwriting." (The docket was as follows: "Union Bank, 12-5-60. Paid in on current account of miscellaneous bills, £350.") "According to the course of business, it would represent a sum of £350 paid to the credit of the Union Bank into the Bank of England. As he gave it to me I entered it in the 'Walks-book,' and also in a 'Rough-book' that used to be on Pullinger's desk. It is the book now produced, and there are some figures on the same page in his handwriting, although the figures, '£350,' are not his. My figures represent a sum of £350 paid into the Bank of England on the same day to the credit of the Union Bank."

John Thomas Preston said he was a clerk in the Private Drawing Office of the Bank of England. On April 12 it was part of his duty to make up the account of the Union Bank in the pass-book produced; which correctly represented the sums paid into the credit of the Union Bank on that day. There was no entry of a sum of £350 as paid in.

Mr. Giffard, counsel for the prosecution, then told his lordship that this was the case on the charge against Pullinger.

At the conclusion of the evidence of each witness, the Lord Mayor asked the prisoner, "Have you any questions to put to this witness?" But Pullinger's invariable reply was, "No, my lord." When Mr. Giffard made the assertion that the whole case was now before the court, the Lord Mayor said to Pullinger; "Have you any questions to put, prisoner?" To which the latter replied, "My lord, my intention is to plead 'Guilty.'"

The Lord Mayor: "But you might wish to put some questions."

Pullinger: "No, my lord; I do not wish to give any unnecessary trouble."

The depositions were then read over, and signed, and the prisoner was committed for trial on the specific charge of stealing £350, the property of the Union Bank, on April 12.

The case against the prisoner Lyttleton was then gone into, and, after a great deal of evidence had been given, he was, as we have already said, acquitted. On his being discharged from custody, Pullinger affectionately shook him by the hand, and he quitted the court with his friends, while Pullinger was taken below. Before the latter was taken to Newgate he sent up a message to the press representatives, requesting a public statement that he had done his utmost to atone for his crime by assigning everything he had in the world to the Union Bank, leaving his wife without a bed of her own to lie upon, and without other clothes than those which she wore at the time. It was understood that no other charges would be brought against Pullinger, his plea of "Guilty" being amply sufficient for the purposes of justice.

At the Central Criminal Court, on May 8, the Grand Jury returned three true bills against William George Pullinger, the late cashier of the Union Bank, for felony. Just before the court adjourned, the prisoner was placed at the bar, and pleaded "Guilty" to all the charges preferred against him.

On May 15, 1860, Pullinger was placed at the bar of the Central Criminal Court to receive the judgment of the court.

Mr. Baron Channell said he perceived that the prisoner had pleaded "Guilty" to two indictments for larceny, and he understood that Mr. Giffard, who appeared for the prosecution, intended to put the court in possession of some further information respecting the prisoner.

Mr. Scrimgeour, the manager of the Union Bank, was in attendance, and an intimation was given that he would give the court any information that might be required of him. He was accordingly sworn, and, in answer to questions put by the learned judge, Mr. Baron Channell, he said: "The prisoner has been for five years in the employment of the Union Bank as chief cashier, but he has been altogether in the service of the bank for twenty-one years. His salary originally, I believe, was about £300 or £400 a year, but when he was appointed chief cashier his salary was raised to £500, and about four months before these transactions were discovered it was again raised to £600 a year."

Baron Channell (to the witness): "I see that the prisoner has pleaded 'Guilty' to two indictments—one charging him with stealing the sum of £350, and the other the sum of £3,000. Is that the total amount of his defalcations?"

Mr. Scrimgeour: "Oh, no, my lord; there are other defalcations to a very large amount."

Baron Channell: "What amount do you suppose is the entire sum that has been misappropriated?"

Mr. Scrimgeour: "About £260,000. The whole amount is £263,000."

Baron Channell: "When do you suppose the first defalcation took place?"

Mr. Scrimgeour: "About the month of January, 1855."

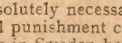
The prisoner was then asked whether he wished to put any questions to Mr. Scrimgeour or to address any observations to the court. He replied that he did not wish to put any questions to Mr. Scrimgeour, but he desired to say a few words before his lordship passed sentence. Mr. Baron Channell told him he was at liberty to do so.

Pullinger then addressed the court as follows: "I wish to make a statement to the court, to inform them what my conduct has been since the discovery of these frauds. The moment the directors mentioned the suspicion that was entertained, I at once confessed that I was culpable, and gave them information as to the extent of the frauds, and gave all the assistance in my power to realise securities for the benefit of the bank. Myself and my wife have also assigned everything we possessed in the world with the same object, and in order that as much restitution as possible might be made. If it had not been for the bad faith of a broker who failed last year I should have realised a much larger amount. From the first it has been my determination to plead guilty, and, although my friends have endeavoured to dissuade me from doing so, I persisted in that determination. It has gone forth to the world that I had made up a purse for my wife, and it is only due to her to say that from the first she has always urged me to make full restitution, and expressed her readiness to give up everything and retire to another land upon a small pittance allowed her by her own friends, and there hide her grief." (The prisoner was here a good deal affected.) "If what I have just stated should be considered by your lordship to afford any ground for mitigating the horrors of my imprisonment, I shall be deeply grateful, but if your lordship, like the bank, should feel that you can show me no mercy, I shall still bow cheerfully to your decision."

There was a slight attempt at applause when the prisoner concluded.

Baron Channell then addressed the prisoner in the following terms: "William George Pullinger, you have pleaded guilty to two indictments, one of which charges you with stealing £350, and the other with stealing £3,000, the moneys of your employers, the Union Bank. It appears that you had been in the employ of the bank for many years, and that for the last five years you had been appointed to a situation of great trust and confidence, and that you were remunerated by a large salary. The court only had the power of dealing with the precise charges before it, but it was my duty to inquire into all the circumstances surrounding the offence, in order that I might be in a position to award an adequate punishment, and the result of the inquiries I felt it my duty to make appears to be that during the five years you have acted as cashier to this bank the total amount of your defalcations appears to be the enormous sum of £263,000. It is impossible, therefore, for the court not to see that your guilt is not limited to the two charges to which you have pleaded 'guilty,' but that, from week to week, from month to month—nay, from day to day—you have been persisting in a course of dishonesty to your employers, you being at the time in the receipt of a large salary from them. The case before me, therefore, is one involving a long career of guilt. The utmost punishment to which you are liable for one offence of this description is that of fourteen years' penal servitude; but it is open to the court in its discretion, when there are two indictments, to pass an additional sentence upon the second one; and, after an anxious consideration of the depositions and all the facts of the case, the court feels itself compelled to adopt that course. The sentence, therefore, which I feel bound to pass on you will be that you be kept in penal servitude for the space of fourteen years upon the first indictment, and that you undergo a further period of six years' penal servitude upon the second—in all twenty years. I have listened to the observations you have made to the court, but I find nothing in them that ought to influence me; but if there is any matter that admits of verification, and which you consider entitles you to ask for any remission of your sentence, you must apply to the Secretary of State for that purpose."

The prisoner, who appeared quite overwhelmed at the severity of the sentence, was then led from the dock, almost in a state of collapse.



No Confessing There

A CONFESSION is absolutely necessary in Swedish criminal law before the capital punishment can be carried out. Very few murderers in Sweden have confessed.

The Murder of Elizabeth Gardner in the City, and its strange sequel.

A London Tragedy

"Oh! cruel lights of London,
If tears your lamps could drown,
Your victims' eyes would weep them,
Oh, lights of London town!"
—GEO. R. SIMS.

A VERY remarkable tragedy was enacted in the City of London, in the autumn of 1862, for which Samuel Gardner, aged 38, described as a sweep, and Elizabeth Humbler, aged 19, a married woman, living apart from her husband, were tried for their lives on October 31 and November 1, of that year, before the Lord Chief Baron. Ultimately the girl Humbler was acquitted of the charge, and she was accepted as a witness, though no one who heard the evidence could doubt that she had indulged in a guilty intrigue with the man Gardner, which had really occasioned the crime. The case, which excited a very great sensation, can be the more fittingly described by giving a resumé of the evidence submitted, so that the reader may judge for himself all the circumstances and comprehend on what grounds the prisoner's life was ultimately spared. Gardner had made a desperate attempt to make his wife's death appear to have been due to suicide, and he strenuously denied his guilt; but the whole facts leave little room for doubt that he and the deceased had quarrelled over the position, which was very equivocal, held by the girl Humbler in the household, and that the murder was perpetrated in a fit of sudden anger.

Catherine Kent, a little girl of seven years, declared that Gardner and his wife lived at No. 12, Northumberland Alley, Fenchurch Street. She last saw Mrs. Gardner alive on Sunday, September 14, and she was then in good health.

Cornelius Meyers, a police-constable, said he used to be on duty near the prisoner's house, and he generally awoke him to go to his work. On Monday morning, September 15, he awoke him at a quarter-past three, and the prisoner called out to the witness from the window. On Monday night Meyers heard that Mrs. Gardner was dead, and he spoke to the prisoner on the subject, saying that he was sorry to hear the news. Gardner said he was sorry, too, and never expected that his wife would end by taking her own life, as they were on very good terms. He added that she used to read all the accounts of suicides that were in the daily papers, and that he did not think persons who did that could be in their right minds. He observed nothing strange or unusual about Gardner when he called him that morning.

George Blanchard, a constable at the West India Docks, stated that he had known Gardner for some years, and knew where he lived. On the morning of September 15 he had occasion to pass through Northumberland Alley about six o'clock, and he heard a scream repeated twice, when going through the alley, which appeared to come from the first floor of the prisoner's house. One of the blinds was up in that room, and one down. He was unable to say whether the scream was that of a child or an adult person.

Thomas Matthew deposed that he was employed at the workshop of a builder in Northumberland Alley, and he saw the prisoner about seven o'clock in the morning of September 15. He was going in the direction of Aldgate, and had his sweeping apparatus over his shoulder. About a quarter-past eight the witness heard of the death of Mrs. Gardner. A Mr. J. B. McQuire also encountered the prisoner at about that time on the same morning, and at twenty minutes past seven he observed him sitting on the steps outside King's Head Tavern, in Fenchurch Street, in a stooping or sleeping position.

Mr. E. Sequeira, a surgeon, gave important testimony. He said that about eight o'clock on the morning of September 15 the girl Humbler came to him in an excited state and said that Mrs. Gardner had cut her throat. He went to the house at once, and saw the body of the deceased lying on the ground in the first-floor bedroom. She had nothing on but a flannel vest and a chemise, and had been dead about four hours. The left hand was placed across the chest, leaning towards the throat, and the right hand was also across the chest, and contained a knife. The witness said: "I noticed at this time that there was a sooty impression on the left elbow and the left wrist, and the latter was such as would be made by a finger-mark. I also saw that the throat was cut and that there was a pool of blood on both sides of the throat, but there was no blood below the collar-bone. The wound was about two inches and a quarter in length, and an inch and a half in depth, and it was deepest near the shoulder on the left side. The wound could not have been inflicted by the deceased with her right hand."

The prisoner came into the room while the witness was there, and the first thing he said was, "What's this?" and he immediately stooped down and took the knife from the deceased's hand. It was an ordinary table knife. The prisoner did not touch the body in any way before he took the knife out of the deceased's hand. If the woman had died with the knife in her hand it would have been clasped much more tightly, and it would not have been so easy a matter to remove it from her hand. The prisoner looked at Hubner, and said, "You wretch, you have done this!" and she thereupon fell upon her knees, and called God to witness that she knew nothing about it. The prisoner went out with his child to fetch a constable. Everything in the room was quite orderly, and the witness saw no marks of blood on the person of the woman Humbler. The witness went on to say, in cross-examination, that it was barely possible that the deceased might herself have inflicted the wound with her left hand, but he considered it extremely improbable from the nature of the injury that such was the case. The death of the deceased resulted from suffocation, the carotid artery not having been divided, and it was possible that she screamed after the infliction of the injury to the throat. The hands were a good deal cut about, as if she had used them to defend herself and had clasped the knife. Further medical evidence proved that the deceased was far advanced in pregnancy.

Elizabeth Hubner, the undoubted cause of this murder, gave evidence, and said: "I am the wife of John Hubner—or Humbler—and am nineteen years of age. I used to live in the prisoner's house, and there has been intimacy between him and me since I was fourteen or fifteen. I left my husband to go back to the Gardners' house before June last, and I acted as servant, and did all that there was to do, the deceased being agreeable to the arrangement. . . . I renewed my intimacy with the prisoner. On the Sunday before the murder I went to bed at seven o'clock, and got up the next morning at half-past seven, between which hours I did not leave my bedroom. I went up to the deceased's room to get some matches to light the fire, and saw her lying on the ground, with the child at her feet. I took the latter, who was between two and three years old and had previously been crying, out of the room. Soon after this Mr. Gardner came home. I said, 'Good God! Sam, come upstairs!' and when he saw his wife lying dead, he said to me, 'You wretch, you have done this; if you don't move out of here, I'll give you in charge!'"

The police went into the witness's room and searched everything she had. The prisoner gave her three shillings to go to her mother's at Gravesend. She left the door open when she went to fetch the doctor, and the prisoner entered the house in her absence.

The witness was examined with a view to showing that she had often threatened violence towards the prisoner, and that the latter had taken a knife away from her which she had been seen sharpening, and which she used to take up to her bedroom at night. Hubner said, "Before God, he never took a knife from me in the bedroom," and added that he had threatened her repeatedly. She did not know that Gardner had decided that she should leave the house until after the murder. Some persons were in the habit of sending obnoxious letters and valentines to the deceased referring to the connection that existed, to the knowledge of the neighbourhood, be-

tween the prisoner and his "servant." Hubner was apprehended at Gravesend.

The prisoner's deposition was then put in and read. It was to the effect that he was willing to tell all he knew. That he had been married to the deceased about seven years, and that they lived happily till Hubner joined them. The girl went away to get married, but only remained with her husband for six weeks, and then rejoined the Gardners. On the Sunday before the crime she was incessantly insulting and annoying his wife, and he then made up his mind that she should leave the house the next day. He and his wife slept together on the Sunday night, and were quite friendly. He got up and went to his work as usual, and when he left the house the deceased was in bed with the child. He then enumerated the places at which he had worked, as a sweep, on the Monday morning, and said that he found his wife dead when he returned at eight. He accused the girl of the crime because he thought they had had a quarrel after he left the house, and said he believed that Hubner felt revengeful because she was to leave his house that day. His wife was not left-handed. James Gardner, a son of the prisoner by a former wife, declared positively that he had heard Elizabeth Hubner threaten the deceased on several occasions. Once he heard her say, "I've got into this house again, and I'm never going out of it."

Mr. Ribton, on the second day of the trial, made a fine and effective speech on behalf of the prisoner, about whose guilt considerable doubt was entertained in the public mind. He contended that the deceased had been rendered wretched and miserable by the intrigue which had existed between the prisoner and the girl Hubner, and that, in consequence, she was in just such a frame of mind as to render her liable to an attack of suicidal mania. If a murder had been committed, he submitted, all the evidence pointed rather to Hubner as the guilty party than to the prisoner, whose conduct throughout was consistent with innocence, and who had no motive for getting rid of his wife by violent means. Mr. Ribton's able address occupied nearly three hours in its delivery, and a verdict of "Not Guilty" was confidently anticipated. Mr. Poland, however, had the right of reply on behalf of the Crown, and he proceeded to demolish the theories of the defence so effectually as to secure a verdict, albeit the jury took an hour and a-half to decide. The foreman said, "We find the prisoner guilty," but at the same time they were desirous of recommending him strongly to mercy, on the ground that they believed that after the prisoner and his wife went to bed on the Sunday evening, they had had a quarrel about the girl Hubner, and that the act was committed in a sudden rage. The prisoner then addressed the court in a firm, clear voice, saying, "I can safely declare, upon my word of honour, that I am as innocent of my wife's death as a babe unborn, or of knowing anything about it. Any man who could destroy the life of his wife, with his flesh and blood in her body, hanging is too good for him. I swear before God that I am innocent of this crime; it is not in my instinct to do such a thing; I would not do it for the world. There is a greater judge than your lordship who knows all. I fear Him more than any earthly judge, and I thank Him that I have not got this crime to answer for."

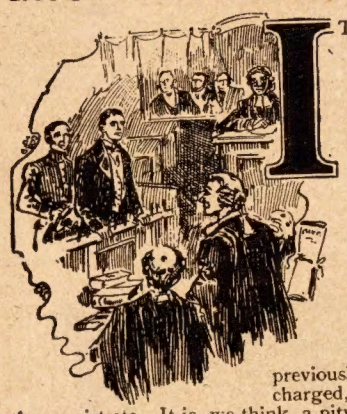
He was then removed from the bar, still protesting his innocence. Gardner was respited about a fortnight later, and his sentence commuted to penal servitude for life. The probabilities are that he was guilty, but the whole case was enshrouded in so much doubt and mystery that it would have come as no surprise to most people at the time if the jury had refused to convict on evidence which, at the best, was ambiguous and unsatisfactory.

FOUND THE DECEASED LYING ON THE GROUND.

A Curious Point of Law.

THE following incident is probably without a precedent in the annals of the law, and has a peculiar bearing upon the ethics of meum and tuum. A pleasure steamer was making a trip through the picturesque beauties of the Rhine when the kitchen-maid on board, having been the recipient of a good hauling over the coals by her superiors for some cause or other, determined to "get a bit of her own back," so she promptly proceeded to put her plan of revenge into operation by heaving overboard into the romantic river all the pots and pans and other goods and chattels belonging to the culinary department. The steamboat company then sued her for theft and damage to their property, but the judge ruled that there could be no theft, as the girl never had the goods in her possession, and that it was impossible for them to prove damage, as the vessels, although they were lying at the bottom of the river, might be in just as good condition as ever they were.

STRANGE CONFESSIONS.



IT may seem astonishing to the ordinary mind that a sane man should suddenly confess to a murder which he did not commit; yet we know that cases of the kind are constantly occurring. The motive for those confessions varies a good deal; but in most cases the prisoner ultimately ascribes this peculiar form of vagary to having been on the drink for some time previously, and he is discharged, after a lecture from the magistrate. It is, we think, a pity that these self-constituted "murderers" are not severely punished, for their false confessions put the police to no inconsiderable trouble and expense, and often enable the real culprit to make good his escape.

Sheward, who murdered his wife and distributed her body in small portions about the streets of Norwich some years ago, confessed to the crime because he could no longer bear the secret of his hideous crime, and Thomas Fury, who killed a loose woman at Sunderland more recently, wrote a confession on his prison slate, in order to escape—even at the cost of his life—the horrors of penal servitude. Only recently a man confessed to a murder which had never even been suspected as being other than a case of natural death. He was left alone on one occasion with a baby a few months old, and for no motive that he was able to describe, he amused himself by choking this hapless infant by forcing corks down its throat. Here again conscience was at work, and brought about a tardy confession.

But in this article we would deal rather with the false confession—the admission of some crime with which the individual crediting himself therewith had really nothing whatever to do.

In the year 1819 two brothers, named Boon, confessed in the Supreme Court of Vermont, United States, to having murdered one Russell Colwin, in 1812. The victim was a man of weak intellect, who was related to the Boons, and worked for that family. According to their confession this unfortunate youth angered them one day by his laziness, and the elder Boon struck him a tremendous blow on the head with a hoe. They said they left him lying in the field, and then he disappeared. The brothers declared that they did not know what had become of him. But in the year 1819 a neighbour began to dream dreams in respect to the vanished Colwin, à la Mrs. Martin, mother of the lamented Maria of that ilk. This neighbour dreamed repeatedly that she saw the Boon brothers murder the lad and hide his body. The field indicated in her vision was carefully searched; Colwin's pocket-knife was found, and close at hand were discovered some bones, which were declared to be human. Thus confronted with what looked like decisive evidence, the two brothers confessed to having perpetrated the murder, and begged that, as it had happened so many years before, and was not premeditated, they might be let off with imprisonment for life.

Shortly after Colwin reappeared, alive and well. He stated that he had run away because he was always being punished, and had only returned because he had been told of the trial, and wished to save the Boons from the effects of their false confession. The brothers then declared that their statements had been untrue, and that they had owned to the crime in the hopes that, having confessed, their lives would be spared.

A man named Sharpe gave an elaborate and detailed confession of having committed a murder at Liverpool in 1833, and stuck stoutly to his story for some weeks. He then withdrew it, after an alibi had been distinctly proved, and explained that he was drunk when he first made it, and persisted in it because his wife seemed to favour another man, and he thought she would like to have him out of the way.

In India, so lately as 1830, no less than three persons confessed to having committed a peculiarly revolting murder, but the police were able to prove that they could have had nothing to do with the crime in question, and it was never discovered with what object the trio had agreed to charge themselves with the awful deed.

During a great famine at Nuremburg in 1787, two women, Maria Schoning, and her friend, Anna Harling, conspired together to accuse themselves of a murder, in order to secure for their starving children the maintenance allotted by the State to orphans.

Thus confession cannot always be considered a proof of guilt.

Leaves from Our Notebook.

Dr. Sacheverell.

DR. SACHEVERELL, a man of slender talents, forced himself into popularity and preferment by two political sermons preached at Derby, and at St. Paul's, in 1705, and for which he was impeached in the House of Commons. He was sentenced to suspension from preaching for three years, and his two sermons ordered to be burnt. He afterwards was preferred to a valuable living, and his reputation was so high that he was enabled to sell the first sermon preached after his sentence for £100, and upwards of 40,000 copies of it were soon sold.

Brought Back from Death.

ABOUT the year 1766 a young woman named Marie Lamarque, who was employed as a servant with a man of very depraved habits, in Paris, having rejected certain dishonourable proposals that he made to her, so mortified the villain that he determined to be revenged on her. He clandestinely put into the box where she kept her clothes several things belonging to himself and marked with his name; he then declared he had been robbed, sent for a constable, and made his depositions. The box was searched, and he identified and claimed several articles as belonging to him.

The poor girl, being imprisoned, had no defence, and all that she said to the interrogatories was that she was innocent. The judges, who in those days seldom scrutinised any case very deeply, pronounced her guilty, and she was condemned to be hanged. She was led to the scaffold and duly executed, though in a very unskilful manner, it being the first attempt of the executioner's son in his horrible profession. A surgeon bought the body, and as he was preparing in the evening to dissect it he perceived some remains of warmth. The knife dropped from his hand, and he put the young woman to bed and endeavoured to restore her to life. After some twenty minutes' exertion his efforts were rewarded, and when the unfortunate opened her eyes she saw the figure of a priest (for whom the surgeon had sent immediately he perceived signs of life) standing at the foot of the bed, and she imagined herself in the other world. She clasped her hands in terror, and exclaimed, "Eternal Father! you know my innocence, have mercy upon me!" She continued to invoke the ecclesiastic, and it was a long time before she could be convinced that she was not dead, so strongly had the idea of punishment and death impressed her imagination. Nothing could be more affecting than her exclamations to him she considered as her supreme Judge. The poor girl, having thoroughly recovered, left the house of the surgeon that night and hid herself in a distant village, whilst the man who had been the cause of all her misery remained unpunished.

Replies to Queries

IN ERROR.—Our version is really quite correct. We had an expert hard at work for days making the most minute researches.

BEN TROVATO.—Ben Hutchinson we know, and Ben Sykes we think we know, but who are ye? (1) She was tried and acquitted. (2) In 1879.

AIGBURGH.—We should *like* to think she wrote the verses because they are very good; but —— as Mr. Balfour, in his fiscal moments, would say!

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